

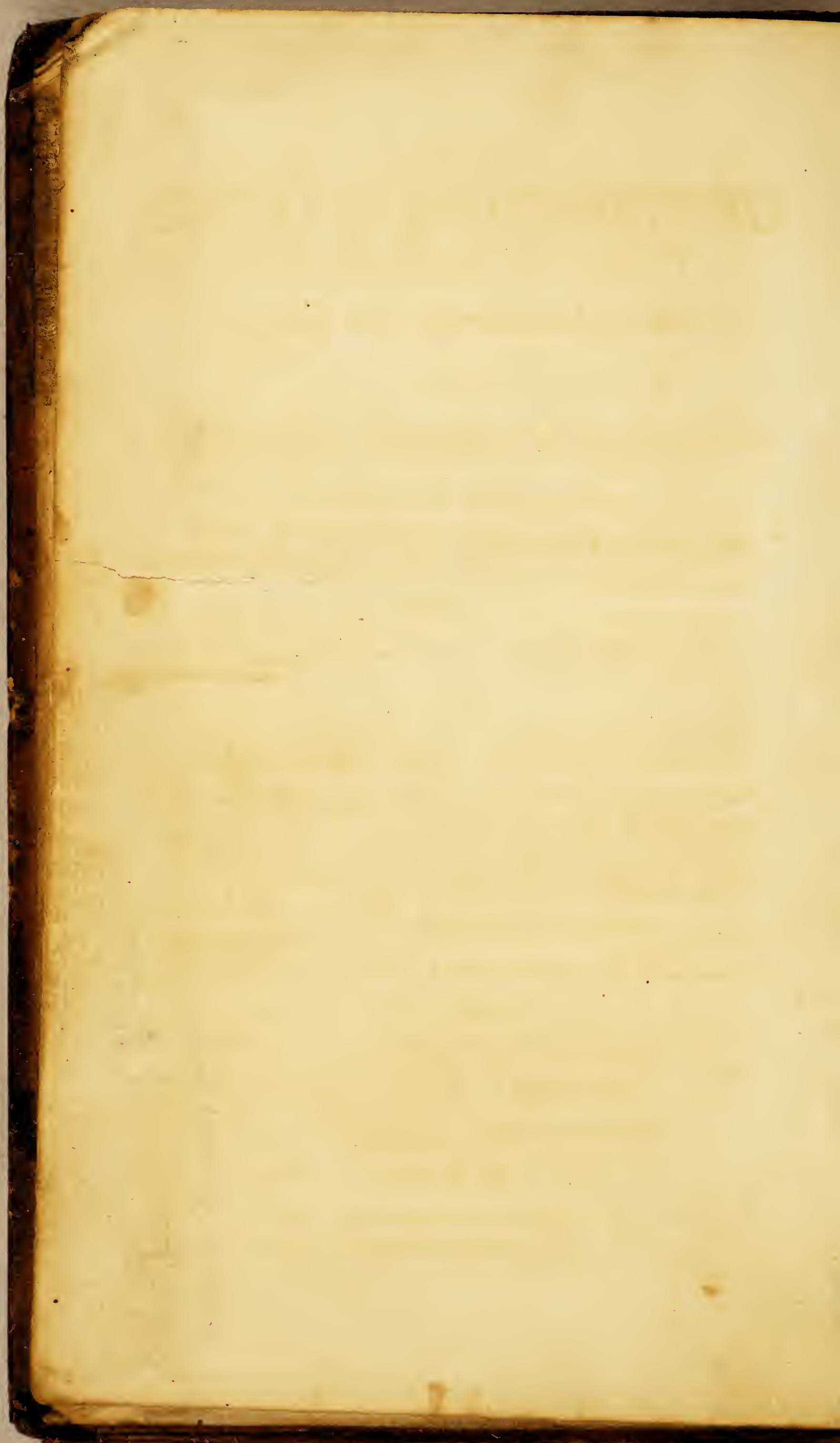
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THE
GENERATION OF LIGHT,
OR,
VINDICATION OF THE BIBLE:

BEING A
Repository of Sacred Knowledge;

CALCULATED TO PROMOTE
TRUE RELIGION AND HOLINESS,

BY REMOVING
Superstition and Prejudice

FROM THE
MINDS OF MEN OF ALL RELIGIONS.

SEEK YE THE LORD WHILE HE MAY BE FOUND, CALL UPON
HIM WHILE HE IS NEAR. ISAIAH.

PROVE ALL THINGS, HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD.
ST. PAUL.

DIVEST THY MIND OF PREJUDICE, AND THY SOUL WILL
BE PROFITED. COTTON.

Volume First.

By ROWLAND COTTON.

Boston:

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1796.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

TO THE OFFICERS OF THE ARMY

AND TO THE OFFICERS OF THE NAVY

AND TO THE OFFICERS OF THE AIR FORCE

AND TO THE OFFICERS OF THE MARINE CORPS

AND TO THE OFFICERS OF THE COAST GUARD

AND TO THE OFFICERS OF THE ROYAL NAVY

AND TO THE OFFICERS OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE

AND TO THE OFFICERS OF THE ROYAL MARINE CORPS

AND TO THE OFFICERS OF THE ROYAL COAST GUARD

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AND TO THE OFFICERS OF THE ROYAL MARINE CORPS

AND TO THE OFFICERS OF THE ROYAL COAST GUARD

AND TO THE OFFICERS OF THE ROYAL NAVY

P R E F A C E.

THE principal cause from whence proceed our unacquaintance with, and inexperience in the theory of subjects sublimely *Divine*, as in the perfections, and attributes of the *Infinite Deity*, is in general the consequences of *wilful* prejudice, not *natural* ignorance.

It is a moral impossibility to be over-stocked with an attainment of sacred knowledge, in the things peculiarly appertaining to our salvation : there is a very important difference between an humble religious desire after an understanding of recorded truth ; and a rash, ambitious, curiosity to penetrate into the *Divine* essence contained in the oracles of this truth ; if we would wish to attain unto a competency of knowledge of the revealed religion of God, we must have recourse to the one thing needful, to accomplish our wishes : that is---humble prayer to the throne of grace, for another religion which crowns all the rest, that is---*imputed religion* ; which is the union of *God's* spirit, with our spirit ; without which we may read the bible from *infancy*, 'till *old age* ; and not understand.

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It is true, we cannot "*by searching*" find out *God* in all his working attributes ; but we are also to consider that all the attributes of *God*, are not in Scripture record ; but such of his attributes as are there recorded, are for our comprehension, and by *prayer*, and *holiness of life*, we shall find them mysteries only to the *ungodly*, but not "*past finding out*" to the *christian soul*.

It is a lamentable consideration that too many read the bible, as they do moral authors ; more for criticism than with a view to be improved, and amongst the number of the latter it might be my lot to be cast : all the favour I beg, is, that none will criticise as they go, but read on, and see if a *proceeding*, do not elucidate a *preceding* passage ; and when they come to the end, collect in one mass what they conclude to be undefendible points, and give the author christian candour for the rest.

May the *Lord* bless these weak endeavours to promote brotherly love ; that we may no longer take all the crooked, and bye ways we can find to heaven (on purpose to meet, and fall out on the journey) for the glory of his holy name.

R. C.

BOOK I.

Chap. I.

On the *Attributes* of the DEITY.

THE *Infinity, Sovereignty, Omniscieny or Immutability* of God, was never yet denied, questioned, or doubted, by *one* individual believer in *natural, revealed, or imputed* religion; and, notwithstanding the incomprehensibility of this inconceivable self-existing *One*, we are all universally united in one undivided opinion of his mysterious, uncreated existence. The works of creation alone (exclusive of those of providence) manifests the indisputable demonstration of the wisdom, and power effectual, of the *Great I AM!* consequently, as rational souls, it behoves us to dwell upon this incontrovertible evidence without doubtful conjectures, or unprofitable surmises, and confine our speculations to subject matter more peculiarly adapted to the humble ideas of our finite capacities; and, with the assistance of that religion of nature, which, as rational

onal creatures we are endowed with, endeavour to profit by serious contemplation, on the wonderful workings of the *Infinite God*.

We are conscientiously convinced by the dictates of reflection, that before the confused multiplicity of wandering atoms (if the term might be allowed) were compacted, and compounded, into the direct order of natures symmetrical regularity ; that the *Almighty Architect* of universal perfection, reigned in the serene mansions of original silence, seated on his *Throne of glory*.

Solitanous perfection being inconsistent with the pure wisdom, and holiness of his *Almighty* nature, he did by the unerring power of his majestic omnipotency, frame, or form in his mind, some wonderful, and sublime excellent causes, for the effects of futurity.

Nowherein consists the *Infinity* of *Almighty God*, by being the sole occupier, and self-existing inhabitant of primeval chaos. What space, or duration might elapse with the *Great Jehovah* in this perfect, and inconceivable seat of immaculate Glory ; *is past finding out* : or what ideas of succeeding revolutionary causes and effects, might be entertained by his Omnipotent will ; is equally mysterious : or what decrees, or purposes, might be the result of his wise, and uncontrouled deliberations ; ponderates with an equal degree of obscurity upon our imaginations : these are the unsearchable, and *hidden things*

things of God ; never by revelation, or imputation, disclosed by our *Maker*, to the finite understanding, and knowledge of one child of Adam's race ; neither is it consistent with religion, or human reason, to contemplate, or ponder, upon such unimportant, heaven-concealed secrets : let it suffice, for one, and all, to say, and believe ;—there is a *God* ! and an infinite, eternal, unchangeable, and everlasting *God* ! and whosoever professeth the religious tenets of any denomination in the world, cannot pronounce the name in the language they understand, either prophanely, or religiously, without an awful impression in a greater, or less measure, being at the same time stamped upon their minds with a degree of power, forcibly distinct and alarming, from any other expressions of course, uttered at the same period of time.

I hope we are now come to a universal, united belief in a *Deity*, or first moving principle of *Infinity* ; which all of us that believe in religion or in revealed scriptures——call *God* ! and it is a melancholy circumstance in the annals of redemption, that neither the creation, nor the cross, is sufficient to convince a small diminutive number of self-positive, irreligious, of its veracity ; so as to bring their confused and unconnected ideas into a uniform regularity of confidence in the fundamental pillar and corner stone of religion.

Such are the advocates for *Atheism*, and all that can be said, in addition to traditional, and recorded proof,

proof, is, that if the works of creation, redemption and providence, continually before their sight, and daily, and hourly manifested beyond all disputation to their senses, is not sufficiently awakening to dispel doubts, remove scruples, and enlighten their conceptions, that they directly quit all social intercourse with mankind, as baneful to society, and disgraceful to rational creation; and take up their solitary abode in the dreary caverns of unfrequented stubborn cliffs; and await with silent obstinacy, the great, and dreadful conflagration of all created nature, and try the experiment of marble preservation, and thus be convinced in the universal disorder of all things, of their dear bought woful perversity and folly.

The reader will be pleased to excuse this short digression, as it could not with propriety be omitted, for it would be needless to attempt a descant upon the wisdom, and beauties of creation, to one that did not believe in the first creating cause; for which reason we shall have but little occasion to introduce the fallacious doctrine of *Atheism* throughout the whole work.

We now again assume our original theme—the Infinity of *God* and his existence from eternity to everlasting; that is, without beginning, and without end—This is the stumbling block to those infatuated souls before alluded unto, and not only those, but to many others who profess to believe in divine revelation; but to attempt to screen themselves from
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the future rewards of iniquity, will indulge themselves with the shadowy comfort, and false peace of wilful blindness, wilful ignorance, or wilful hardness of heartedness.

It is a mystery of mysteries, not only to them, but to us, and not improbably to the very Angels in *Heaven* : but nevertheless, this is no justifiable plea for them, or us, to attribute all the causes, and productive effects of those impenetrable causes, that are continually exhibited to all our senses (in a diversity of forms, natures, and degrees) to irregularity, and discordant *chance* ; and even if this dogma of fallacy is granted, the maxim is as void of foundation as ever ; for this almighty wonder-working *chance*, must be first put in motion by some other wonder-working *chance*, and so on, 'till at last we find ourselves so far from a rock to build upon, that in the end, we are just where we set out.

If there ever had been a beginning to the existence of *God*, there must be once a non-entity of what we now denominate by the appellation of an *Infinite God*, and of consequence must be some superior and prior *power* to put in motion our *God*, and then this *God* of ours at most, can be but a created Angel, and the *power* that created him must be the *Self-existing Infinite God* ; or in other words, a *God* that made a *God* ; but now we are as far from a probable conclusion, or full definition as ever—for now we must find out what *power* put this other *power* in motion that created the *God* of heaven and, earth ;

earth ; and then a parent must be found to foster this last fictitious *power*, and so on *ad infinitum* ; and after straining our conceptions, and imaginations, even to a wreck, we must at last give up the point of fruitless rumination, and rest humbly submissive to plain revelation of the sacred word of God, as contained in the Bible ; that the *first* moving principle that put all dependent causes in agitation, must be self-existing, and without a beginning ; and this *Being* you may call *God ! first power ! original principle !* or what else you please, that tends to impress a sacred, and religious awe upon the mind, so that you grant he never had a *Creator, Maker, or Father* ; nor that the works of his hands, are the productions of *casual chance*.

From what has been said, I conclude there cannot be in conscience a *real Atheist* ; but that every soul of mature years, and moral understanding, must *dread*, if not *serve*, a Wonderful ! Uncreated ! *Almighty ! and Infinite Deity !* which was, and is, and is to come.

Are we that believe in the Deity, now come to a final belief in his Infinity ?—I call him Infinite in this place by his existence being beyond conception, and for his eternal title, we shall speak of in its proper place, as proceeding from Infinity.

I come now to enter upon a subject matter peculiar to the Godhead, that I candidly acknowledge I do not expect will meet *universal* or (more briefly speaking)

speaking) *general* approbation ; but according to the most impartial commentation I can put upon the sacred writings, it does not appear to me confutable, or a subject of animadversion ; and being an established principle of my faith, I shall arm myself with the shield of christian patience ; and buckler of charity and love ; wherewith to encounter all that differ in opinion from me.

I now suppose *God* to be the sole, self-existing *Being* in the extensive space of shapeless, unmoulded Chaos ; and for the duration of his thus occupying all alone this Chaotic local extension ; how long, or how short ; it is as much beyond our imaginations on the one hand, as it is immaterial to our salvation on the other——it is enough for us to rest convinced that he is there.

Thus we fix the *Almighty God*, with original supremacy, who by the wisdom of his Divine pleasure and all powerful will ; did cause, form, or create, a companion for himself, for the enjoyment of this seat of perfection in his presence for futurity ; and to be coequal with him in all its surrounding glories ; but the necessary power for accomplishing all his future ordinations he reserved to himself ; and this first manifest evidence of his *Infinity*, and *Power*, in a pure, and perfect spiritual *Being*, he denominated by the appellation of *Son* : this is my opinion of the beginning of the Son of *God*.

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We are now come to the first instance of Almighty wisdom, and power ; for at least the first moving cause from whence proceeded any manifest effects of the Omnipotency of the *Great God* to be comprehended by angels or men. *The creating his Son.*

This is an article of faith, I am convinced will subject me to many aspersions ; but still I flatter myself with the charitable, and favorable verdict of some ; and that Author who attempts to please, or reconcile all parties to his own wishes or sentiments, in moral, or religious matters ; must be endowed with a wisdom and sagacity even superior unto (If I may be allowed the phrase) the Deity himself ; for it has been hitherto found either impracticable, or beneath the notice of Heaven, to reconcile all discordant superstition and doctrinal ignorance to *revealed truth* ; and I hope where predetermined prejudice is banished from the mind, the next Chapter will elucidate, what may appear obscure, or undefinable in this.

I have no desire to offend any denomination of worshippers ; for I entertain love universally, and wish to “ *live in charity with all men* ;” and if I am persecuted for my labours, it shall be for errors in judgment, and not from errors of design.

We have now the *Infinite God* and *Eternal Son* before us, as the only two existing Spirits in this expanded, unbounded space of Glory ; and in the
next

next chapter shall give my definition of the word *Eternal*, in this place attributed to the *Son of God*. We now proceed to the second instance of infinite power, and wisdom—that is, creating of Angels—What intervening space might be prescribed by *God* between creating his Son and Angels, is to us of no consequence. It might be millions of years, or it might not be one minute according to our calculation : suffice it to say—there they once *all* was, and designed by *God* as glorious ministering spirits, to rejoice in his presence with praise and hallelujahs for ever, and ever.

Now let us for one minute suppose that the wisdom and power of *God* had still remained in the bosom of eternal or infinite inactivity ; and the transformed chaos of heaven, and nature, had still retained its original irregular, and uncompacted figure, destitute of all uniformity, or symmetry of order ; (for I conclude no person is vain enough to imagine the infinite architect of the upper, or lower world, was under either subjection, or compulsion to the framing, or establishing of either) I say, suppose it had been the case—from whence then must have proceeded all the glorious dispensations of the *Godhead* ? What then but a successive revolution of eternities (admitting the phrase) would been productive of *infinite* observation ? What an endless and undisturbed solemnity and silence would possessed everlasting duration : no jarring, discord, animosities, or strife, could ever have disconcerted the sober silence of unfinished chaos : the peaceful
retreat

retreat or recess of majestic tranquility and fathomless perfection, would never been molested, and thrown into commotion, and wild disorder, by the dismal tumults of *apostates, rebels, or transgressors.*

With what degree of propriety might the Father and Parent of all things in heaven and earth, have viewed the uncircumscribed orb of crowded darkness, as infinitely beneath his notice; and left unpolished *nothing* in its natural state of imperfect nullity; confining purity, bliss, and excellence, to the space alone immediately occupied by his infinite presence, and thus all the empty space of chaos, concentrating in his own sacred enjoyments—here we can draw neither comparisons or allusions from any created objects; but conceive of our *Maker*, as he is represented to our ideas by rational conceptions; granting his *omniscience*, and *omnipotency* is unlimited; extending without obstruction throughout the whole circumference of heaven and earth; and consequently allow him to be present every where, and at all times—but we are now speaking of his person particularly; on imagination, his power never had been displayed in creating heaven, or earth; and I believe, very few (if any) bible readers, or *humble prayers*, do address the *throne of grace*, without their conceptions being in a greater, or lesser measure, impressed with a divine image of their *Maker's* personal beatitudes, in resemblance of man, surrounded with the rays of celestial brightness that baffles all description, and will not admit
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of any parallel comparisons ; and thus are we compelled by indisputable demonstration to confess, that when we attempt to elevate our speculations beyond the boundaries of created nature, and penetrate into the beauties of celestial holiness ; *we are lost !* our feeble ideas are confused with the multiplicity of glorious objects that present themselves to our imaginations, and overwhelm our weak capacities by their unceasing advances, and leave us in a maze of religious wonder !

How much easier it is to bring a feint image of the *Great and Holy One* himself within the bounds of our representations, and deduce sacred, and awful, conclusions from those representations of his immaculate perfections ; than it is to bring to our ideas any perfect conceptions of the glories, that are the concomitants of his *Infinite Godhead*.

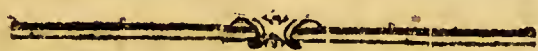
Again ; who could have said unto the *Great I AM*, *that I AM ! Why doest thou thus ?* if in his wisdom he had been disposed to have displayed his uncontrouled power in a manner quite opposite and unconnected with the present state of things : he was subject to no injunction, or restraint, for the modification of modern accomplishments ; those transactions rested entirely upon the option of his own uncontrouled will : all matter, and motion as it is now composed, and compounded, might been so reversely modified, as to bear no similitude, or distant resemblance to its present form, or nature ; either in heaven or on earth : might not the *One Supreme*

Supreme Being, have enjoyed chaotic perfection, and sacred silence all alone *for ever, and ever*, if it had been the result of his own unrestrained, and self-regulating will; and regarded futurity in a created dress, as a matter of insignificancy, beneath the notice of his dignified supremacy, or original *Infinity*! *Wonder O man, and lift up thy soul in praise! glory be to his holy name!*

The *Holy One* had wise ordinations for the blessings, and happy enjoyments of futurity in reserve: he had *decreed* peace, and contentment for the works of his hands, and to be fully accomplished in his own due time: he had angels in view in his eternal will; his *will* was effected, and angels became existing *spirits*, after his own image, perfectly endued with every needful property or qualification, to capacitate them for the blissful enjoyment of their *Maker's* glories, in his immaculate, and immediate presence for evermore.

Thus are the wonderful works of the Lord manifested in the heavens and on earth, they will always be past finding out: how justly might we with the Psalmist lift up our souls with sacred astonishment, and contemplate profitably on the wise ordinations of God in these words——“O Lord how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all.”

Chap. II.

ON THE SON OF GOD BEFORE THE CRE-
ATION.

THIS immaterial and glorious *Being*, the *Son of God*, formed after the same divine and perfect image and spirit of his Father, and possessing all those perfections of purity which was first the peculiar properties of the original and self-existent agent of bliss.

This *Son of God* by his Father's ordination was capable of enjoying and fully experiencing an equivalent measure and degree of silent felicity peculiar to his exalted state with his Father, and endued with competent attributes to render him adequate to the Father in perfective glory—and in glory only : in power we must draw the line of distinction between the former, and the formed ; the cause, and the effect ; the created, and the Creator ; and not rob God of what is his indisputable prerogative—*Infinite, and Almighty Power !*

In this stage of the work I cannot ascribe any dignified title to the Son as *qualification* or properties of *power* in comparison with those of the Father in any superlative degree to those aforementioned :

tioned : we grant the endowments, and immutable perfections of the Son infinitely exceeds our most elevated thoughts, conceptions, or imaginations ; but still all this does not justify any plea in admitting an equality with the Father ; for the conferred perfections of the *created* Son, must be subservient to the Infinite, self-existing properties of the *uncreated* God.

I hope it is obvious to every candid reader ; that I make no other distinction between the two persons but the power of Infinity. The Son was not Infinite, and of course, must be inferior ; then *God's* superiority or supremacy must consist in his power.

I cannot in any respect attribute the title of Infinite to the Son, because there is such a chain of revealed circumstances that convey to my ideas a beginning to his existence ; but this is not the case with my ruminations upon *God* ; for the more I attempt to fathom the depth of Infinity to conceive his first state of *being* ; another *God* is immediately enforced upon my mind that had no beginning ; consequently, it is morally impossible that there ever could be a beginning to *God*, nor never more than *one no-beginning God*.

To the *Son of God*, I can freely subscribe to the article of *eternal*, as a property peculiar to his prior formation or creation to all other created works of *God*.

I am well aware that the two phrases *Infinity*, and *Eternity*, have in general, from the earliest ages, been construed in the same sense, and intended to convey the same meaning in the production of all causes and effects in heaven and on earth; but as it appears to me an erroneous translation or construction; I have taken the liberty to distinguish them as a cause, and an effect; and from such a sense of the words, I can bring to my conceptions a religious portion of scripture record, that otherwise would be still obscure to my deepest researches, and leave me (like the rest of the world) in a labyrinth of scripture mysteries "*past finding out.*" I cannot see what advantage scripture mysteries "*past finding out*" can be to any person of any denomination; whether a *Calvinist*, or *Lutheran*, *Jew*, or *Infidel*.

Now for the two phrases *Infinity* and *Eternity*, whether they are taken literally in one sense, or two, it is of no material consequence to the *Jew* that pays obedience only to the injunctions of the moral law: his faith or his worship it no way affects; for christianity or the trinity, is no article of his litany; and the same we may say of a *Mussulman*: but under the christian dispensation it is of very weighty importance, and demands our serious and religious consideration; because it enables us to form more correct ideas of the *Messiah*, and deduce such conclusions from his heavenly embassy, as will remove many of those prejudiced obstacles, and impediments

ments to christian unity and religious fellowship, as is now unhappily diffused throughout the extensive circuit of the religion of *Jesus* all over the world, as well as dispelling those gloomy doubts that produce confusion and discordant sentiments amongst the real advocates for pure faith and holiness; those who have no greater desire but to devote their time to the service, and maintaining the cause of "*Jesus Christ and him crucified*;" by saving their own souls and the souls of their neighbours, by regeneration and repentance: for our Saviour says "*Ye must be born again*;" that is regenerated; and "*except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.*"

Now as a faith in *Jesus Christ*, and obedience to his examples and precepts, (which so strongly enforces repentance) is the only foundation whereon we can place our hopes of enjoying the glories of heaven, or escaping the miseries of hell; how absolutely requisite it is for us to endeavour to attain unto as competent knowledge of his attributes either in a divine or moral sense, as circumstances will admit of; we have no other standard or proof to regulate our belief by but the sacred writings, and those writings evidently declare by the mouth of *God* himself, that it is his Son, in whom he is well pleased; and *Jesus* says "*my Father is greater than I*;" which could not be if he was his equal.

When we can once become united in our principles of faith that *Jesus* had a beginning, we may
with

with a degree of plausibility, promise ourselves some success in tracing all his other properties and power, as they appear to our senses by the revelation of *God*, and sacred recorded testimony of inspired penmen, in regular gradation in the holy bible; and having obtained this satisfactory evidence, so as to remove all religious scruples from our minds, we shall derive that advantage from his heavenly appointment, that constitutes our happiness in this life, and secures unto us the reversionary glories of the everlasting kingdom in the world to come: well then might we cry out with the righteous man of affliction—"I know that my redeemer liveth"—a Redeemer must be a ransomer; and unto *God*, the redemption was paid.

Here we have the Redeemer of the world brought within conception in all the excellencies of his redeeming nature; but when we confound him with the Father his Maker, as *Infinite* without a beginning, we are directly lost, as in a maze, how to account for this two-fold *God*, that we have represented to our ideas, and who the *Son of God* can be, when we have by our fancies united them both into *two* nominal, but *one* real *God*; the Redeemer and sufferer seems to be lost in the exalted state of the Creator; and the Creator humbled to the despised state of a criminal and ignominious sufferer.

By these loose speculations on the divinity of *Christ* we deprive him of every qualification, and endowment

dowment peculiar to his respective offices as *Prophet, Priest, or King*; and render his miracles, precepts, sufferings, death, and resurrection, void, and of no effect: it is repugnant to every idea of rational reasoning; and an utter impossibility, that an arrangement of such unconnected principles of matter and motion, as is contained in our history of *Jesus Christ* as a man, a Redeemer, and Mediator, can be reconciled to the “*rule of right*” or nature of things; or brought within the narrow boundaries of our rational conception or comprehension; and the most strenuous advocates for unity in trinity after the most close examination, ancient references and intense study, are in the issue compelled to acknowledge, that it is a mystery “*past finding out,*”

Mysteries that are “*past finding out*” are in no measure connected with religious, or moral duties; and those that put such commentations upon the sacred writings, as to represent any part of it as mysterious or “*past finding out,*” and inculcate that doctrine, must be blind guides, and leading their profelytes into the ditch; for who can expect to *work out their salvation*, by ways mysterious, or be guided to *heaven* by a path “*past finding out?*”—in short; it is the spirit of pride that is the parent of mysteries, and the spirit of prejudice, make them “*past finding out.*”

Let

Let us now try to read the plain doctrine of salvation without a mystery.

If we allow the *self-existing Infinity* of the *Father*, and *Eternity only*, of the *Son*, we are then erecting our religion upon the very corner stone that *Jesus* himself laid; Ephe. ii. 20. "*Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone*"—John ix. 4. "*I must work the works of him that sent me.*"

Now we have a foundation stone placed on a rock that will support itself against every weight of argument or animadversion; for we have sufficiency of materials to pursue the building throughout the whole bible; and in the new testament particularly, for every difficulty that obstructs our progress is removed; the *rain* might *descend*, the *floods* come, and the *winds* blow, but our religion will not fall; for it is founded upon a rock; the rock *Christ Jesus*, the only "*begotten Son of God.*"

If we build the christian religion upon *Christ*, as the *Son of God*, and not upon *God* himself (as the religion of the Jews is) we shall meet with no mysterious puzzle to involve us in a dilemma, and scatter us about into every corner of the earth, in search of that which we do not believe we can ever obtain; for we ourselves acknowledge it "*past finding out;*" and thus we may continue walking in the dark and perverse paths of obstinacy, and unchristian prejudice, until the awful summons
await

await us to bid adieu to animosities, and vain strife ; and be convinced of the folly of our *belief* (or pretended belief) that the *Great Infinite, Almighty and Everlasting God*, condescended to that degree of abject humiliation, as to suffer himself to be bound with *cords*, to stand as a criminal before a man (*Pontius Pilate*) to be *buffetted, spit upon, scourged, mocked*, and then *hanged*.

Was this the Creator of heaven and earth ? was this that *Great God*, that could have confounded all his multitude of accusers in a moment with the dust ; or, in the twinkling of an eye, whirled them with his *Judge*, into the abyss of a bottomless burning Hell ? If this contemptible, despised prisoner, worn out with grief, and sweating drops of blood, and bitterly weeping for the greatest part of *thirty years* is represented to me as the *God of Heaven* ; I candidly acknowledge I cannot admit it as an article of my faith ; because, it is "*past finding out.*"

Now if we grant the two aforementioned dignities Infinity and Eternity to Father and Son, we have at once a *God* in heaven, and a Saviour on the cross ; here is full scope to extend our comprehensions of scriptural tradition, and to trace the road to glory, by gradual advances through the channel of *Christ's* mission, as a Saviour, Mediator, and Intercessor ; we know now who purchased our redemption, and who it was purchased of ; and the ransom that the Son paid unto the Father for it ; we have now no difficulties

difficulties to surmount, nor no self-created mysteries “*past finding out*” to retard our progress.

Wherever the words Infinity, Eternity or Everlasting are used in the sacred writings, they bear no nearer affinity in their literal definition, than the personal pronouns *I, thou, he*. *Infinity* is a primitive, original term, the beginning of which cannot be conceived : *Eternity*, is, in comparison to the other a modern phrase, because its beginning can not only be conceived in the mind, but easily traced as the works of *God* in heaven ; and *everlasting*, plainly signifies without end, to endure for ever.

Those places in scripture that speak of the *Lord*, or his mercies enduring for ever, is good sense and sound doctrine ; but where it is said from *everlasting* to *everlasting*, is mere nonsense ; no other than ambiguous, improper phrases and corrupt translations ; it conveys neither sense or meaning to our understanding ; and although the language is ascribed to be the words of the *Royal Psalmist*, I do not believe *King David* ever uttered them after that manner, but even if he did, I see no reason to conclude but a *King* may upon an occasion use an improper or ungrammatical expression as well as another man.

Again, from *eterity* to *eternity* is equally ridiculous ; it is just the same as to say, from a beginning

ning to a beginning ; or in the other case, from no ending to no ending : but if we say from Infinity to Everlasting, the true sense of the words are directly impressed upon our ideas, and we readily conceive the signification to be, from no beginning to no ending ; or from eternity to everlasting, meaning from a beginning to no ending : here the dignity of the *Almighty One*, operates forcibly upon our souls, and elevates our minds to contemplate upon his Infinite immensity, his eternal works and his everlasting existence ; and thus enables us to descry the excellence of his *three-fold* attributes ; *one* in property, but *three* in essence : and *two* of these attributes I ascribe to the Son, that is, eternity and everlasting ; but to poor sinful man I can ascribe nothing but everlasting ; and wish it was possible to persuade all to believe in it.

The duration of Infinity, and eternal existence in the seat of glory I call *space* ; *not time* ; and at the creation of this lower world, I call the commencement of *time* ; for it is said that where *time* ends everlasting begins ; by the same argument of reasoning we may say, where eternity ended, *time* began ; I suppose *time* to begin and end with this world ; for as *time* is measured out by the revolutionary causes of the heavenly bodies ; so when they cease their daily circuits, and the heavens “ *pass away with a great noise* ;” then *time* must also experience the general dissolution, and be no more known ;

known ; and “*the earth and the works that are therein shall be burnt up ;*” “*and leave not a wreck behind ;*” then there will be no further occasion of *time* ; for *time* like all other works of God here below have run its destined course, and fulfilled faithfully its appointed revolution, and *everlasting* will assume its place to endure for *ever* and *ever*.

Thus I have endeavoured to clear up the point between the Infinite Father, and Eternal Son ; and hope some of my readers will have the candour to allow me to publish my faith in *two* persons, as they expect themselves in maintaining *One God*, and *three* persons ; and before I am through, perhaps I may introduce *two nominal*, but not real *God's*, and without depreciating the trinity in the least, which is now represented under *three* (St. Athanasius Creed) and in this case I hope to be fortunate enough to find some advocates and offend but few ; but shall bring them forward in their proper places, and in the end convince all my readers that I believe in the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost* ; and I can solemnly declare this to be my Creed ; only I take the liberty to new modify the present system of religious professors on that grand point of doctrine ; with a humble view to dispel those bigotted clouds, that overshadow the oracles of sacred truth.

I hope in the present stage of the work, no critical animadversions will be cast ; considering we are treating of the Son of God before the Creation :
many

many expressions might with propriety be used now, that will not be admittable then, nor after his resurrection; but if I am found to degrade the character of the *Son of God* in his divinity or either of his offices of Saviour, Mediator, Redeemer, Prophet, Priest, or King; I am open to conviction, and will not shrink from any christian reproof, or admonition: I believe *Jesus Christ* was all this; but I believe *God Almighty* was my Creator.

I see no reason to doubt but the title of Son, was the command of *God* to Adam to give to Cain; for the *Lord* called *Jesus* his Son; and it is but reasonable to suppose that Adam should follow the precept or rule of *God*, instead of *God* following that of Adam; and if this point is granted, we have without scruple a *Son of God* before the world was created.

We now divert from this subject of *God's* having a Son, and treat a little upon his wisdom in creating a Son.

I do not conceive that the wise purposes of *God* in creating his Son, proceeded from any singular merit foresaw in him or peculiar properties pertaining unto him, further than the distinguished honours, that by his own uncontrouled pleasure he thought meet to confer upon him, in superiority to all his other works.

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We may naturally conclude the *Almighty* was under neither necessity or obligation for any assistance in the accomplishing of his decrees, to replenish or perfect that habitacle of holiness: but it was his divine will, to have one spiritual, immaculate *Being*, more nearly allied, and affectionately united unto him than the rest of the heavenly hosts.

Now these ideas of Infinite and Eternal unity and affinity between Father and Son; comes readily without the obscurity of ambiguity to our conceptions; or straightning our imaginations by perplexities, and leaving us in a maze of confused ideas of heavenly operations, "*past finding out*;" and in an obvious manner account for the affectionate appellation we give to our own Child.

I see no reason to doubt but the *Almighty* held occasional intercourse with Adam before his fall, and instructed him how to distinguish between creatures and kinds, as well as his own children; and to call the *males* sons, and the *females* daughters.

By the universal deluge, all record (if any was made) as well as verbal tradition was lost; we do not read that *Noah* had any express command from Heaven to collect any records for the information of posterity; or that himself or either of his family made any; then of course all historical narration of the Antideluvian world must rest upon the
memory

memory of Noah and his family, and the world being at that time near two thousand years old ; there must certainly be a great deficiency in needful revelation ; which leaves a large scope for the man of learning or contemplative philosopher to exercise their respective talents in the needful pursuits to reconcile the present nature of causes and effects to the standard of primeval rectitude and truth.

I only want in the present case to convince my readers of an important point, that what revelation we have got do maintain ; and what we have not got, very probably would beyond all disputation confirmed it ; that is, that *God* had a Son before Adam had, and called him his Son ; who was with him before the world was created ; and in due time sent him to save the world ; and having now resigned all power unto him, will in the end leave him to judge the world : Those that will not acknowledge the *Son of God* in these characters, and no more than a Son ; must either disbelieve the scripture or make *God* a liar ; for he looked down from heaven and spoke with the voice of *Majesty* ; “ *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased ;*” Matthew iii. 17. Did he ever adopt any other Child as his Son ? No. For he was “ *the only begotten of the Father.*” John i. 14. Here we have a unity in glory but not in godhead.

I am

I am now going to insert another principle of faith, which may, peradventure, procure me some foes and I hope some friends.

Let my *Maker* or my *Saviour* be my judge, and my fellow creatures rest contented with the admonitions given them by the *Son of God* in the flesh. Matthew vii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 ; by referring to your bible, I shall save time and paper.

I do not believe that the Creation of the world, or humiliation of the Son, proceeded from any decrees or foreordination of *God*, appertaining unto his future descension to save a mortal race from any impending evil ; neither is it my faith, that at this period, when the Father and Son was the only two existing *Beings* in the expanded space of perfection, that the *Omnipotent God* had even decreed a future generation, much less determined in his mind *all* the future effects and consequences of one ; as too many vainly believe ; but the creation of Angels I believe was decreed co-eval with a decree of his Son, although we can form no conjectures of the intervening space that elapsed.

It is evident that creating the Son was the first accomplishment of the Infinite and Almighty will ; for we have sacred revealed truth to confirm it : John i. 1.

If the *Son of God* before the creation of the world had been co-equal with the Father in Infinity and Power as he was in glory; what absurd grammarians the bible historians must be, to put the singular number *thou*, and *he*, instead of the plural *ye*, and *they*, wherever the *Almighty* is addressed on the works of Creation or Providence.

If the Son was co-operator and actor in Infinite equality with *God*, the first verse in the bible ought to have been expressed after this manner: In the beginning, *God* and his *Son* created heaven and earth: If the Son was *God*, it was the Son that created it: If *God* was before the Son it was *God* that created it: and if *God* and the *Son* was but one, it was a union of the Godhead jointly in one person as well as one *God* that created it: I cannot reconcile my ideas to *two* distinct, personal spiritual existences, and at the same time but *One* indivisible existing spirit: We must either allow a pre-cedency and superiority unto the *Father*, or palpable absurdities, incorrections, and imperfections throughout the bible, which do not produce *one* passage of Infinite equality from the beginning to the end; but even if it did, we then must have *two* Gods instead of one; for where there is an equality between *two*, it is impossible that these *two* can be reduced to *one* in equality with himself.

Again, If the Son was the *Infinite God* in person, he was also so in Spirit; and whether we do or do

do not unite him with the Father in person it makes no difference ; for, if he was *God* himself, and his Father was *God*, how is it possible to reduce these *two Gods* into *one*, I cannot comprehend. From whom he received his mission to descend down to earth ; who conferred the power of remission of sins upon him ; or, from whom he received all power in heaven and earth since his ascension, is one of those mysteries, that with me, is "*past finding out* : " I allow his Divine nature in heaven as well as human nature on earth : but could not the *Almighty God* bestow upon him his *divinity* as well as his mortality ? where then is the heterodoxy of faith, in maintaining *two* persons, *two* spirits, *one* Son and *one* God, the Father.

When *Jesus* was upon earth, he said, "*my Father is greater than I*," John xiv. 28. Again, Luke xxii. 42. "*Father if thou be willing remove this cup from me* (intimating it was hard to die the death) *nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.*" Again, John xx. 17. "*I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.*" In another place he says, "*I and my Father are one*," John x. 30. that is, *one* in will to save mankind, but not in power to do it ; for he saith "*the Father that dwelleth in me he doeth the works*," John xiv. 10. Again, "*then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself, but as the Father hath taught me I speak these things*," John viii. 28.

It

It appears to my understanding repugnant to every idea of rational reasoning, that the Father and Son ; two spirits, two images and two persons, should be represented to our senses, by bible commentators, as three persons, and yet as one indivisible *Infinite God* ; and that these *three* persons, and *one God*, should at the same instant of time be reigning in the regions of Heaven, and extended under the most excruciating torments upon the cross on earth ; and lifting up their voices as *one* dying *God* to another *God* in Heaven, in the singular number “ *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me !*” here we have another *God* brought to our conceptions superior to this dying *triple God* ; then I hope we are at last come to a belief in *one Infinite God*, who was before, and is above all other *Gods* ; for as those *three* persons *Father, Son* and *Holy Ghost* in *one God*, was crucified, dead, buried, and continued under the power of death in a sepulchre *three* days, and then ascended to Heaven (as they all *three* spake in *one* voice “ *to my God and your God ;*”) then we must grant that this *one God* who remained in Heaven, was the *Great Almighty Creator* that we have been searching after, and at last found : now what must be done with the undivided *God*, of *Father, Son*, and *Holy Ghost* that was crucified ? have patience and you will see how I dispose of them ; if another person think he can do it better, I consent to the public umpirage.

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The contemplations of the serious christian, seems to be overwhelmed with perplexities and impossibilities of coming to any final conclusions on this *triple Gods* crucifixion ; and all this because implicit obedience to education, parental influence or sacerdotal tradition have instilled into the mind the incomprehensible doctrine of *unity* in trinity, three persons, and *one God* ; or, as the church liturgy says, *three Gods* and three persons ; *God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost* ; the *Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God*, and yet there are not *three Gods*, but *one God*, says *St. Athanasius* : and this *one God* was crucified, dead, and buried ; and then ascended up to Heaven to *his God, and our God* : this must be the *One Infinite God*.

Now if we look upon the *Son of God* (Jesus Christ) as *God's Son*, as he says he is ; and as *God the Father* himself said he was ; without denying him the pure essentials peculiar to his divinity and humanity ; and the excellence of his *eternal* attributes in relationship to the Father ; we can easily bring our rational conceptions to palpable conclusions, and the godhead no longer appears incredulous, or mysteriously dubious, and “ *past finding out.*”

Thus I have endeavoured to define the *two* phrases, *Infinity*, and *Eternity* ; and although some
learned

learned commentators may differ from me in opinion, I will venture to say ; on this definition, hang all the *law, prophets, and gospel* substance of the godhead, and *trinity*.

The *Trinity* in its several distinct appellations of *three* persons, *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, I sincerely believe in, only beg the indulgence to introduce them in their proper places and characters ; that they might appear equally comprehensive to the mental ideas of others, as they do to myself in their respective attributes and divine natures. The *Father* and *Son*, I have already presented to my readers, and supported the *bible* dignity of both ; we must neither *add to, nor diminish from* the revealed word of *God* ; “ *curled is he that doeth these things ; God shall take away his part out of the book of life.*” Rev. xxii. 19. *Father* and *Son*, we have before us, as revealed, declared, and testified unto us by *both* : but for the *Holy Ghost* I must beg my readers’ patience ; he shall in due course be introduced on the stage in full character, possessing all the inherent qualities peculiar to his divine and spiritual nature, and affinity to the *Father* and *Son* ; and with them compleating the triple divinity of *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three persons and one God*.

I now introduce an observation, that with serious unbiafed rumination and calm reasoning ; put

in the scale with prejudice and rash judgment; I believe will turn the balance in favour of what have been before treated upon, and correspond also with the present translation of the bible.

When the *Lord God* of his *Infinite* and over-ruling wisdom in the celestial space of glory, had in his own uncontrouled mind, *willed* to form, compose or perfect, a regulated nature in the wonderful works of a lower creation; he seemed to have no joint partner, or co-operater in all his works until the close of the *sixth day*; when we find him express himself in the *plural* number. “*Let us make man;*” here is demonstrative evidence of more than *one* being concerned in making *Adam*; although no assistance was necessary, yet it plainly evinces a joint associate in the conclusion: this language must be addressed either to the Son or Angels; and as the sacred writings explicitly treat upon the Son of *God* before the creation of the world, we have better grounds to suppose it was spoke to the former than to the latter.

By thus admitting the *Infinite* and *Eternal* distinctions of *Father* and *Son*; we shall not confound causes and effects with paradox, that will admit of no solution.

The antiquity of this unsearchable doctrine of *two* or *three* in *one*, is no criterion for an implicit obedience, or universal faith; if it should be deemed

ed so, the doctrine of *Atheism* may with a great degree of propriety claim the preference, for that is much more ancient.

There is a very material difference between maintaining *three* persons in one God, and *three* persons and one God. There is as great a difference between these two little simple particles *in*, and *and*; as there is between *yea*, and *nay*, of which no two words can be more contrasted.

By conceiving *three* persons in one God; we distinctly represent to our senses a God with *three* faces; but by bringing to our ideas *three* persons and one God; we naturally conceive *three* persons, and one of them the *Almighty* God.

Thus I have endeavoured to make it appear that the Saviour of this *lower* world, in the *Flesh*; was the *Divine Son of God*, in the *higher*; and have allowed him all his exalted dignities as conferred upon him by the Father, and acknowledged by himself; that is, his *eternal glories and divine attributes* as an heavenly host; and in its proper place, I shall introduce him, and vindicate his cause in all the perfections of his humanity respecting his descension; as the missionary of his Father to save mankind.

Chap. III.

ON ANGELS BEFORE THE CREATION.

WE are now entering upon a subject that bears an affinity not to be separated with the immortal part of ourselves ; and as the similitude is connective may the matter enlarged upon be edifying and instructive ; and proportionably effective towards awakening our minds to serious consideration, stimulating us to a diligent exercise of all our rational faculties, in ruminating upon the peaceful and happy effects of humble and sacred obedience and resignation to the will of the *Almighty Parent* ; and contrariwise, the direful and lamentable consequences of rebellion, and hardness of heart.

The first act of rebellion and defiance against *Infinite Supremity*, we are taught by tradition to believe was premeditated by the Devil ; and the sacred writings no where contradicting, but in several places strongly and evidently sanctioning this tradition ; I can readily acquiesce in the universal opinion of all ages, that the *Devil* or *Satan* was once a pure spirit, but revolted against his *Maker*, and became the propagator of all sin : thus the seeds of violation sprung up in the bowels of a Celestial Host,

and

and spread with baneful rapidity through the regions of holiness.

From this short digression or rather introduction, we now return to Angels in general.

The *Almighty* of his wisdom and divine will, ordained that the wide extended vacuum of *eternal* space should be occupied by inhabitants of a spiritual, immaculate nature; immortally and gloriously perfect, and those perfections should proceed from his own *Infinite* attributes of divine essence.

Now herein consists the difference between the *Father*, the *Son*, and *Angels*: the *Infinity*, *eternity*, *divinity* and *spirituality* of the *Father*; the *eternity*, *divinity* and *spirituality* of the *Son*, and *spirituality* of *Angels*.

Angels was in every degree qualified to partake of, and enjoy in full, the blissful tranquility peculiar to their spiritual natures, and experience that felicity that was calculated for the mansions of everlasting glory and praise. No interruptions or molestation was decreed by their *Maker* to prevent an increase of renewing joy on the one hand; nor any perspective views of future disquietude, discontent, or unsettled passions on the other, to promise approaching unhappiness. All was harmonious and serene delight, and every thing wisely conducted, appointed and arranged by the *Great Architect* of original

original perfection for endless joy throughout the immensity of glorified space; with a continual succession of revolving bliss, surrounded with the beatitude of *Infinite* excellence: no restraint, no incumbent obligations enjoined by the Author of glory to lessen the universal tranquility, or impede its glorious effects: no requisitions prescribed, but what had a tendency to contribute to its increase; gratitude, compounded with celebrating praise, was the only return required by the first great, original, and moving principle, *God!* for those glorious participations.

The flowing beams of glorious radiancy which issued from the fountain of eternal and immortal life, was contributing towards the melody of the angelic choir, and produced additional lustre to the brightness of the harmonizing concord—the shining orbs and celestial rays issuing from this source of *divine immateriality*, was the requisite concomitants to elevate and adorn this spotless state of unmolested tranquility; this seat of unclouded and illuminated splendor of magnificence. When we divest ourselves for a few minutes of all sensual and worldly considerations, and ruminat composedly upon this glorious situation, and unpareled seat of universal praise; how our reflections are stagnated for want of vent, and all our imaginary ideas dwindle into incomprehensibility and inconception: the unity of adoration and universality of hallelujah exceeds the confined limits of our finite discernment;

ment; and the unblemished lustre that sits on the countenance of these perfect spirits, surrounded by the beauties of *purity* and *holiness*, demand our veneration, love and praise.

In this habitacle of glory, formed and erected by the hands of *Infinite* wisdom and boundless *Omnipotency*; nothing was permitted admission inconsistent with the unceasing celebration that was continually presented with a concordance of heavenly music, or in any measure affect the tranquil harmony and social felicity of the angelic inhabitants; wisdom *Infinite*, had appointed it as the seat of undisturbed *everlasting* love! Here was a total exemption of all those restless and turbulent passions, and all those greivous calamities and sorrows that are incident casualties to human nature; none of those lamentable effects proceeding from the discontented causes of unsatisfied mortals could be supposed to have taken up its dwelling in this spacious orb of dazzling lustre and perfect bliss; the impenetrable walls that surrounded this vast and extensive immensity of *divine* residence, was the work complete of the *One Infinite, Eternal, Almighty and Everlasting God!* how infinitely short our conjectures! how amazingly deficient from the truth should we be, if every faculty of the soul was strenuously employed without intermission, in animadverting on the excellence and beauties of heaven; if all the whole expanded orb of created nature, with all its numerous ornaments, conveniences

ences and delightful objects was improved, purified or refined to the highest degree of human imagination, and accompanied with every alluring endowment that the heart of man could devise ; how short ! how visibly defective should we be in any imaginary comparison of the *heaven of heavens* ! the seat, the dwelling place of our *Maker* ! the foundation whereof was laid on the rock of *Infinity*, as a monument of *everlasting glory*, erected by the *Self-existing* Architect of wisdom ! supported by the pillars of *omnipotent* holiness, and covered with the canopy of *eternal* benignity and love ! what an inconceivable magnificence ; inestimable and permanently secure ! and will abide until generations in rotation dwindle into atoms, and time and creation will be no more.

In this unfathomless state of felicity could any unruly phantom of passion possess the immortal hosts, or prompt them with aspiring views to more sublime happiness ? could desires after dignity or promotion, exalt their ignoble ideas to covet ambition, or an equality with their *Maker* ? here was glory unmeasurable and uninterrupted and never ending possession of this joy was their allotted portion ; the first *great* and primitive cause so decreed it. Here my readers, I place the *first decree* of *Infinity*, that angels should for ever and ever glorify their *Maker*.

Lustre of perfective pleasure and righteousness untainted, was the robes wherewith they were adorned,

ed, and exalted unity of love and concord in the *divine* presence, the durable blessings designed for them ; this was the happy state of the angelic race, in their state of original purity ; now wherein consisted the degrees of difference in the enjoyment of *glory*, between the *Creator* and the *created* ? the sublimity of the *Godhead*, seems to be almost lost in the general profusion of united praise ; we can hardly bring our ideas of the *Deity* at this crisis to more exalted strains than a partaker in general with his Son and the Angels, in the undivided concord of harmonious celebration ; superiority and inferiority seems to be lost in the depth of bliss ; and even that acknowledgment of *Infinite* originality, that was the *Creator's* prerogative, and the gratitude that was due as the primeval cause ; consisted in the enjoyment of that felicity that was peculiarly appointed for them ; I cannot make any other distinction but *Infinity* ; for I believe the capacity of angels, are equally extended as those of their *Maker*, as far as relates to happiness, and capable of partaking a proportionate measure of the glory of heaven, and so will be everlasting. *God* having reserved unto himself all wisdom, power and goodness ; his other perfections are distributed throughout the celestial circuit.

We are now coming to a diabolical and tragical scene in heaven ; the voice of *God* doth by the light of nature, reason, and revelation, display to our conceptions a tumultuous revolution in the dwelling place

place of the *Most High* ; a premeditated, a predetermined rebellion took place, and the baneful effects of impiety, ingratitude, and cursed ambition was a general and dreadful discord in the regions of glory ; a confused and disordered animosity, proceeded from original and universal harmony ; and the whole habitation of heaven was thrown into a state of unruly, irregular consternation ; all the hosts thereof were involved in the woful scene, and became in general partakers of its disquietude and animosity ! conspiracy and open violation of all precepts and obligations, compounded with tumultuous and discorded passions, were unitedly combined to over-turn the eternal system of *Infinite* wisdom ! no longer did the echoing tranquility of harmonizing purity redound through the wide extended expanse of the dimensions of heaven ; every musical voice was in jarring discord and dissention, and the whole multitude of *glorifying* choristers in an entire perturbation and disorder ; even the submissive and cheerfully obedient was imperceptibly involved in the general wreck ! how awfully reflective ! how solemnly contemplative to a considering soul, must the state of heaven be at this period ! how we are lost and overwhelmed with wonder when we attempt to bring to our ideas the spring or fountain of this deplorable circumstance ! we cannot bring them to any stable conclusions for an origin to this general anxiety in the mansions of felicity ! from whence could its destructive rise originate ? was there any invisible atoms of principle and power
in

in existence, to be productive of such alarming consequences? No; was there any restless, or evil spirits in the *lower* space of yet dark and unregulated chaos, or in the confused abyss of uncompound-*ed nothing*; where neither *matter* or *motion* existed, the place of non-entity, to penetrate through the barriers of *Infinite* stability and formation? No; here our comprehension seems to be influenced by the powerful impulse of *divine* inspiration, and this mysterious working circumstance is brought within our conception: a *Spirit* of purity from an original cause, as difficult to trace, and impossible to fathom as *Infinity* itself; conceived and brought forth *Iniquity*. *Pride*, the forerunner of all subsequent evil sprung up in *heaven*; so that *good* and *evil* are both *Infinite* in their original. The former in our *Maker* whose beginning we cannot trace; and the latter in an holy *angel*, the beginning of which we cannot trace. What I mean by *Infinity* in this place, is, we cannot bring our ideas to any point of conclusion, from whence sprung sin, to tempt or allure the first *heavenly* sinner; consequently, *good* and *evil* are the *only* two primeval causes of their respective different effects that exceeds the conceptions of mortal man, peculiar to this world or the other; although we may in other points differ in our sentiments, and vary immensely in our conjectures upon God and his works; yet still we have a foundation to build upon, and can arrange our thoughts into some regular form to rest upon; but in the *two* aforementioned cases of *good* and *evil*,
we

we can find no *rock*, or even a foundation of *sand* to build upon ; we can make no beginning.

We must grant that *Satan* (we will call him) *miraculously* and *wonderfully* became *proud* ; or, more properly speaking ; ambitious of an equality with his *Maker* ! This once great bright luminary of glory, from causes mysterious, produced a consternation ; his swollen ambition envied the superexcellency and omnipotency of his Creator ; and his own *self-creating* haughtiness disdained to submit to the dignity of *Infinite Majesty*, and thus became possessed with turbulence and anxiety to arrive to a degree of fathomless equality with *self-existing wisdom* ! all covenanted obligations of gratitude with provoked arrogance was resisted, and every sacred engagement violated, as by the ties of an angel he was bound to obey.

By private seductions, artful insinuations, and delusive inducements he did allure, prevail upon, and triumph over multitudes of the angelic hosts, and with this factious band of mis-beguided spirits, he sinfully and vainly bid defiance to the *Army of God*, and declared war against the *Great Architect* of *heaven* and *earth* ; the uncontrouled and wise disposer of all events ; and, with the feeble hopes of unguarded and mistaken resolution, engage in the unequal combat with *Infinite Supremacy*, with the vain expectations of applauded victory.

Alas,

Alas, all was imaginary ! and his self-promising triumph, crowned with the shadowy success of lamentable vanity ! here the terrible ! the dreadful ! overthrow of the revolters was fully accomplished, and the wisdom, power and majesty of God for the first time manifested to angels in heaven, and since revealed to the children of men.

Here the *Almighty* (not from the wisdom of his perfect and righteous will, but from the efficient cause of his provoked judgment and malignity against him) did, for the manifestation of his own glory, and the angels of purity ordain, create, or appoint a place of punishment for the first transgressors, and called this place *HELL*, as a contrast to the seat of glory occupied by the upright called *HEAVEN*. I here place the origin of the two places and phrases, *heaven* and *hell*. It was not *heaven* before the revolution ; but the occupied space of the *Most High*, and his surrounding host of this *holy* space ! the proper definition of the word *heaven*, is the contrast between *pleasure* and *pain* ; it is a relative term, and admits of proportionable degrees and measures of happiness even in this world, as *hell* is just the reverse ; but to draw the proper line of distinction between our *heaven* here, and *heaven* hereafter, we must make this allowance. Our *heavenly* enjoyments here are frequently alloyed and even compounded with the essentials of *hell* ; which renders them in a manner imperfect, and us incapable of fully enjoying them : and just contrariwise

trariwise is our present *hell* ; there are sweets intermixed with its bitters ; so that in this world we enjoy neither the pleasures of one, nor pains of the other fully ; but according as our inclinations dispose us for either of the *two* in this world, so shall we have our fill in the world to come ; separate and unconnected with each other : *heaven* will neither be alloyed with the dregs and scum of *hell*, nor *hell* be palliated or softened with the tranquil pleasures and pure joys of *heaven* ; both will endure without ceasing for ever, and ever.

Oh ! ye Children of Adam, fear, and tremble !

If we attempt to bring within the limits of our finite conceptions the *frowns* of the offended *God*, at the first rise of this tumult and consternation ; what a ponderous impulse take possession of our souls ! how momentous our reflective ideas are ! we are presently convinced of the impossibility of arranging our speculations, and all our imaginations are overwhelmed and lost in the maze of fathomless obscurity ! *Dreadfully terrible ! Terribly dreadful ! Majestically alarming and awakening to succeeding generations !* and shall we choose such a *General*, as a vanquished *Devil*, to lead us to battle against the *God* of all the *world* ! *Forbid it Mighty God !*

Here we see the woful effects of the *first* sin ever committed against *God* ; not in *Heaven*, for that appellation proceeds from the occupied place of the

the upright *angels* (as I mentioned before) but in the unlimited space occupied by *God*, his *Son* and the *Angels*; but if we allow an allotted place for the fallen *Angels*, called *Hell*; *Heaven*, is now a circumscribed limited habitation, being only a *portion* of the original space of *glory*; consequently there never was, nor never will be *sin* in *Heaven*. The *Devil* never was in a *heavenly* host; for his sin was committed before heaven was: he sinned against his *MAKER*, and that sin created *heaven* and *hell*.

How melancholy must be the reflection when we contemplate on the dreadful overthrow of such a multitude of spirits divinely inspired, and their situation calculated for the enjoyment of perfective bliss and unceasing felicity! How tremendously dreadful must be the exaggerated wrath of *God*, to see legions of pure, undefiled spirits immaculate, by premeditated impiety with obstinate perverseness and presumption, combined in a body to conflict with their *Maker*, and threaten perfection with dissolution! Our very ideas sink into nothing; our most elevated imaginations dwindle into non-existence when we attempt to balance in the scales of finite conceptions, the weight of *Infinite* wrath! How numerous the combatants, how durable the conflict, we know not. The manner, the motions of the consternation, we can but form imperfect notions; our surmises amount to no more than unstable conjectures; all we know is, that victory was declared in favour of *God*. The *Almighty* was victorious,

victorious, and the deluded were deceived and vanquished ; here we must cease from speculation, and reflect upon the unfortunate effect it had upon future generations, and ponder upon its baneful consequences with mournful silence ! this much we know from the powerful impulse of our rational endowments ; that original purity became irrevocable, and the evil irretrievable, and terminated in a diminution or decrease of *angelic* and *holy choristers*, and of course produced a vacuity in the celestial habitacle.

What now may we suppose to be the will of the *Almighty* after this general confusion, but again to replenish the vacated seat of *glory* with a new formation of *spirits*, and in a manner peculiarly consistent with his own will, and secure from any powerful allurements or vain aspirations that might hereafter produce similar disastrous consequences to what was past ; by ordaining future created spirits to pass revolving limited space or seasons, in a state of pilgrimage through a lower world, to capacitate them for the enjoyment of the glory of the higher. In this place it will not be improper to introduce a few words respecting *God's Omniscience*. Whatever is advanced by commentators or expositors of the sacred writings to vindicate the *foreknowledge* of *God* relating to the moral or religious actions of mankind ; or even those that carry their tenets so far as to descend to the *motion* of the most minute particle upon the face of creation ; even so far as the

the separation of one grain of sand from another at the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah ; neither of these as far as ever came within my perusal, nor any other Author amongst the strenuous promulgators of this doctrine ; carry their ideas any farther than *modern Creation : Eating the forbidden fruit* ; whether we grant, or not grant, that this was decreed or foreordained by the Almighty, as *Calvin* strongly maintains ; these are his words ; “ *By the ordination and will of God, Adam fell :* ” *Beza*, *Zuinglius*, *Piscator*, *Zanchius* and others are of the same opinion ; I say, whether we grant these Aphorisms or not, we are no nearer to a definitive or conclusive point of *God's* foreknowledge than before : I put the question ; Did the *Almighty foreknow*, or *predestinate* the revolution in the seat of glory ? the first original sin of all sinfulness, the rock, the foundation, the basis, the root, the tree, the fruit, from whence ever has and ever will proceed all the transgressions iniquity and evil, that we can be guilty of against our *Maker* : this is the grand mystery that we must endeavour to develope ; this is the key that unlocks all the entanglements of scriptural perplexities, and paves the way to wisdom : this is tracing the *origin* of sin, and place before us an extensive latitude for contemplation on Satan and his present and past state.

If *God* foreknew, he ordained, the first rebellion against himself, and of course is the *Author*, or at least *permitted* that sin ; and what he foreknow
and

and permit, is his will it should be done ; and the fulfilling his will cannot in the proper sense of the word be justly termed *sin* ; consequently, Satan is not a sinner. This is not an axiom whereon I can build my faith, it conveys to my ideas the most preposterous imaginations, and make religion and every moral and religious virtue appear as deceiving objects to our sense, and reduce us much beneath the irrational dignity of the brute creation, from whom no more is required than to answer the purposes of their creation ; but according to this dogma of faith it is not only required of us, but we are irrevocably *compelled* to *think, say, and do*, that which frustrates the revealed cause of our *Creation, Redemption and Salvation* ; and this by the very *BEING* that is our *Creator* and to be our *Judge and Executioner*. For the present I must wave this subject, as it will be renewed again under its proper article. It was introduced here only as a preliminary how Satan became a sinner.

I am inclined to believe that the Devil was in no respect superior to the other Angels ; but in the rebellion a Ringleader, and sin or the desire of equality with his *Maker* originated in *him* ; but in no respect can I acquiesce in sentiment with those who maintain that the Devil is Infinite as *God*, and as powerful in evil, as *God* is in good ; and that a continual war always and ever will be, between them and their respective followers : this is laying the axe to the root of all religion with a vengeance, and
may

may *Heaven* preserve us from the establishment of such tenets.

I come now to be more particular as to my own private opinion, and hope every candid reader will indulge me with *liberty of thinking*, and *liberty of speaking* ; for, as I do not subscribe to the *maxims* particularly set forth as *self-evident propositions* of others ; neither do I presume to enforce my own upon them ; I only request that they will give my principles of faith as impartial, and minute investigation as I have theirs, and with the same charitable candour and brotherly love.

Sin, as I mentioned before, I believe to be *Infinite*, as it must be, except we attribute its rise and promulgation to *God* ; which at present I cannot do, and hope I never shall. Whatever cannot be traced to its originality must be *Infinite* ; we can trace sin in its beginning with Satan, but we cannot trace its first source to take possession of Satan : so that the *Infinity* of sin and *Infinity* of holiness are the two only mysteries “ *past finding out,*” or in other words beyond our comprehension ; and I hope in the course of this work to elucidate every seeming difficulty necessary or needful for the salvation of men under the banners of *unity, peace and concord*.

We read in the sacred record of the fallen Angels being *chained in darkness until the judgment day* ; at the same time Satan, or the Devil, is said
by

by the same author, *St. Peter*, to be “*walking about seeking whom he may devour* :” the inconsistency of these phrases must proceed either from mis-translation, or be admitted as allegorical ; for the devil cannot be chained in darkness, and “*transformed into an angel of light*,” as *St. Paul* says, and walking about seeking whom he may devour, all at the same instant of time : the former of the three states which the devil is represented to be in, appears to my ideas the most probable and consonant to the *dignity, power* and *wrath* of an offended *God* : the other two terms, if we allow them to be the pure style and language of their respective authors, alludes only to the attracting and alluring charms under which many of our darling and inciting temptations are represented to our sense as pleasing and gratifying to human nature ; and on the contrary, to the powerful and enforcing evils that subdue our passions, and frequently involve us in labyrinths of woful reflections, and spirits loaded with dejection, and so hardened in a course of impiety and profaneness that we are *devoured* by sin, and without abounding grace miraculously infused into our souls we are *dead* unto righteousness, and undone for ever.

If we take the Devil in the sense *St. Paul* represent him to be in “*an Angel of light*” in a literal sense ; every sinner, the most profane, diabolical or impious, have sufficient reason to expect the same display of *Almighty* remission and distribution of
grace,

grace, or else our Creator would be a “*respector of persons*” and that in a manner so partial, which exceeds every idea of *Justice, Mercy* and *Truth* that can possibly be conceived by man. And lastly, if we take the Devil in the other sense, *literally*, “*walking about seeking whom he may devour*,” we must of course attribute unto him a power *equal*, if not *superior* to *God*; for if he is not, nor cannot be kept under restraint; he must be (as a certain author maintain) *Infinite* in himself; and by allowing this apotheosis there is no difference between *good* and *evil*; for the *two Infinites* tempt us one against the other; and represent to our sense two candidates canvassing for public favour; and we not knowing which of the two to support, do become alternately implicit subjects to him who holds out the most feasible gratification; one satiates us with nauseous pleasures and delights while we are in this world, short and momentary as it is: while the other can, and have secured in reversion treasures for us inconceivable, and for everlasting duration in the world to come. By taking the three aforementioned states of Satan in either sense, yet still the balance of advantage inclines on the side of *God*; for with him we are sure there is no deception, hypocrisy or deceit. Thus much for an argument with those that would wish to render *Satan* equal unto *God*; but for my part I think it is impossible for any fundamental evidence to be deduced from such premises: It is neither *Atheism, Deism*, nor *Arianism*; but in the magnitude of enormity

ormity more destructive to the increase of vital piety and virtue, than all the three united : Of this sort of believers I hope there are but *few* ; and may we never be scourged by *heaven* with an increase. We now return again to the scene of tumult in *heaven* : In this general disorder we must conclude that the *Father*, *Son*, and *Angels* of obedience was unitedly engaged to quell the tumultuous ferment ; and though the *Son* was undoubtedly concerned in the dismal quarrel, I assign unto him no further power towards suppressing this *first*, lamentable riot, than his joint assistance in union with the *Angels* : his time was neither come, nor *ordained* to “*bruise the Serpent’s heel*.” I beg my reader’s to observe, that although I have represented a *battle* in *heaven*, as most conformable to our ideas and imaginary conceptions of things, causes and effects of this nature ; yet in my own opinion never any thing of the kind took place ; but no sooner was the evil intension of the seducer and his adherents formed in their minds, but the *All-wise* searcher of private councils immediately knew and was perfectly acquainted with the diabolical scheme in agitation ; instantly, without delay, or terms of capitulation, passed the inflexible sentence of everlasting torment, and whirled them with his wrathful frowns into the gulf of never ending misery ! I am rather inclined to believe that the whole power of *Almighty* vengeance will not be displayed towards the accursed crew of apostates till the judgment day of all mankind,

mankind, and then, in one confused mass of agony and unceasing woe; Satan, with all his past, and future followers, will be cast into the threatened pit of darkness, fire, and pain in one promiscuous heap; and the pain of every spirit from Satan to the last of his unfortunate vassals, be all equally alike in the same degree, measure, and everlasting duration, "*In chains of darkness*," (as the Apostle says) I believe they are until then confined. Our supposed temptations by them will come with more propriety under another head: and for a battle in heaven, as *St. John* records while he was in the *spirit*, perhaps I may treat of in its proper place by defining his being in the *spirit*.

Chap. IV.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE REVOLU- TION.

I REALLY find a difficulty in arranging my thoughts suitably adapted to the solemnity and awfulness of the subject. An attempt to bring to our ideas in any comparative degree the wrathful countenance of provoked *Infinity* at this time of presumptuous defiance of his *power* and *majesty*; confounds our conceptions in the dark labyrinth of unsettled thoughts, and overwhelms us with our own scattered imaginations! It is a melancholy reflection to every considerate soul, to contemplate for one minute, what was the original will of the *Great* and *Infinite* GOD: nothing less than the permanent establishment of united harmony and everlasting *bliss*; the most exalted degree to which we can raise our finite admiration, falls far short of the unfathomable goodness and mercy of *God*!

A mournful reflection for generations yet unborn, that so good a *God* should meet such a rebellious, ungrateful return!

The harmonizing concord of redounding praise that existed in the bright mansions of felicity—is no more!

more ! from a once *general*, it is now become a *partial* concord : discord interposed and frustrated the primitive intentions and pure designs of *Infinity* : that enjoyment of happiness that was peculiarly appropriated for *angelic* concordant glory, was sacrilegiously defeated by the *prince of sin*, and his infatuated followers ; and this unprovoked ingratitude terminated on the part of *God* with everlasting vengeance ; and on the part of *apostacy* with never ending wretchedness and misery !

This was the original source of our first parents' unfortunate deviation from the path of angelic rectitude and purity with which they were created : the powerful enmity against the inhabitants of the new world, to render ineffectual the wise and divine purposes of *heaven*, by the malevolent *one* ; the origin, fountain, and spring of all evil, calamities, and disease, was too prevailing ; too unfortunately triumphant over the unguarded innocence of the primeval parents of mankind ; so ingeniously, so artfully, and so alluring was the first temptation managed, that the innocent and happy pair fell unfortunate victims to the deep laid scheme ; and thus incurred the first threatened curse, announced to disobedience : *to die from original righteousness* : this is the lamentable effects of transgression ; it is this that has involved all their posterity in sin and evil inclinations ; and as far as the *decrees* of the Almighty relates to any of the concomitants of man's nature, in his *thoughts*,
words

words or *actions* ; this is his *first* and *only* decree ; that every son and daughter proceeding from *Adam* and *Eve* should be involved in the irremediable catastrophe, by being conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity, and be under the necessity of regaining their *Maker's* favour, by unceasing penitence for the salvation of the soul on one hand ; and continual labour with sweat of the brow for the support of nature in the body on the other ; and without intermission the faculties of the *body* or *mind* should always be in a state of improving activity, to enable them to recover the forfeited inheritance of their unfortunate primogenitors ; neither exclusion or exemption is entailed ; but unwearied exertions required to recover the first lost peace.

In our individual speculations upon the works of Creation and Providence, it is very obvious to every one, that our sentiments are widely different in many important points, until we come to enter more minutely into the causes and circumstances of things, than what is conveyed to our ideas by common publications or general conversations ; some, through want of knowledge how to express their private thoughts and opinions ; others through fear of reproach or censure, retain in their own bosoms those sentiments they are desirous of disclosing ; and others again wavering in their minds, are timorous of their own abilities, and dubious of their own veracity ; and thus
permit

permit their days and years to escape them in one continual round of inactive and reprobable supineness ; neither beneficial in their own generation or useful to those that succeed ; a blank in the present, and a cypher in the future ; by burying their talents in the earth.

The following paragraph will (I have no room to doubt) carry with it preposterous reflections to *many* ; while at the same time I know it is conformable to the *private* opinions of some, and whose exemplary lives for piety, and every other christian ornament of the mind, is a credit to themselves and an honour to the religion they profess. I have staked my word and reputation to the world, to conceal nothing that in my opinion will tend towards enlightening mankind in the mysteries of unrevealed points of the sacred writings ; where my judgment do not correspond with others ; I am open to charitable conviction, and candid confutation ; by begging the same indulgence as our Saviour requested of the unbelieving Jews ; *John* viii. 46. and *St. Paul* 1 Cor. iv. 4. I believe if no rebellion had taken place in *heaven* ; there would be no creation of this recent world, or any necessity for one : for the uninterrupted communion of harmonious Angels (and very probably occasional increase of them) would have superseded all needfulness for this habitable globe, as a preparative for the attainment of future reversionary, unity and concord with the heavenly choir : Satan's revolt
produced

produced a great vacuum in the seat of Glory, and it was the will of *Infinite Majesty* to replace those fallen rebels with others, more pure, more perfect ; and to prevent the like similar ill consequences by a new creation of Angels, it was wisely appointed by the *Great Agent* of nature to create this world, and place the first *Heir apparent* to the seat of future felicity, *in this world*, as *Lord* ; and to reign with dominion over every part of it ; and by a course of probationary experience to become qualified for, and capable of, the enjoyments of the world above ; and, instead of a repetition of succeeding creation of souls, the *Great God* appointed, ordained and decreed the gradual increase of *Spirits* for the habitation of this lower, and modern world, by the process of natural generation ; and for which purpose he created them *male* and *female*, with all other living productions after its kind ; and while this new created angel was in the *body*, all the works of creation, besides the additional ones of Providence, should be subservient unto him, and calculated for his present temporal occasional necessities ; so that the Angelic part was not to be defiled, or tainted with uncommon gratifications of the body, by secular and unprofitable enjoyments ; to neglect of the spirit, and an unmindfulness of the cause, and future effects of his creation.

Thus are we in this respect under an obligation to the *Devil* for being placed in this lower sphere ; and woful is the reflection ! we seem to be too sensible

fible of it by our indefatigable diligence in our returns of gratitude towards him ; if not from any esteem we really have for him, yet from a very plausible delight we take in serving him ; and to give the sentence its proper definition : the *Devil* is our *master*, and *God*, our *Creator* : we serve one for his *attractions* ; and fear the other for his *wrath* ; but in the proper sense of the phrase ; we *love* neither of them ; we pretend to hate the *Devil* and follow him ; we pretend to follow our *Maker*, and shun him : to sum up the whole in a few words, we are building castles in the air ; we are vainly trying to reconcile impossibilities, and unite the two most opposite extremes that can be conceived in the heart of man : that is, *to be the Devil's associates here, and to be God's companions hereafter.*

As the first leading spring and fountain of all evil and sin ; the too powerful and prevailing enemy to all purity and peace both in heaven and on earth ; it cannot be supposed that the *Great Almighty God*, *Maker of heaven and earth*, and *Creator of all its numerous hosts*, would permit such premeditated, execrable impiety to escape unpunished, and pass with impunity ; much less to permit, or more properly speaking, to tolerate or even commission him to walk to and fro the earth, seeking whom he may *tempt, defile, corrupt and destroy*. This maxim bears no allegory or allusion to the manifest mercies of *God* in the works of creation and providence : we must, under these absurd notions, sub-
tract

abstract very largely from the *power* of God over Satan; or form very unfavourable conclusions of our *Maker's* love towards us; by being first *conceived* in sin, then *brought forth* in iniquity, and afterwards all our days *tempted*, and most *powerfully tempted* by an evil *Angel*, that was even successful in his seduction over the very angels of brightness and immaculate perfection; and in the very presence, and while surrounded with the inconceivable beatitudes of God himself; the one *Great I AM, what I AM!* by taking the language of mankind in either of these two senses, we can draw no stable conclusions, and after all our unceasing controversial animosity and discordant arguments, it terminates in the end in these two points. One says, "*these are mysteries past finding out; it is not our duty to attempt to descry the unsearchable wisdom of God.*" The other in return replies, "*these temptations and trials are permitted by God for the manifestation of his own Glory.*"

I candidly confess it is a *mystery* to me "*past finding out*" wherein consists the *manifestation* of God's *glory* in creating spirits for heaven, and permitting them to be forced almost headlong into hell. It is true good and evil are placed before us; or in other words, we are tempted by evil, and attracted by good; but unless the attraction is displayed with *more* powerful energy from God, than the temptations are ensnaringly laid for us by the *Devil*; the former cannot in any measure avail towards us for good,

good, and as we are *conceived* under the influence, and *born* in the family of Satan (as to be “*brought forth in iniquity must be*”) we must unavoidably be his children, his vassals, his captives and his subjects, and share with him for ever and ever, the pains of hell’s unremitting and relentless torments.

Now if good and evil was placed before us as two objects of our choice, and their respective future rewards annexed unto them ; it is more than probable we should *one* and *all* make choice of the former, and in this respect the design and original motive of Almighty Creation would be accomplished ; by the vacuum of heaven being replenished with new created angels ; here our imaginations and ideas are not stretched beyond the possibility of conclusions, here we can form, comprehend, and conjecture, and find a solid foundation to rest upon, and in no want of materials for the finishing our structure, and find our way to Heaven, “*by working out our salvation.*” Nothing can be called a *choice*, where there is any compulsion on the one hand, or restraint on the other ; or if the will is in any measure captivated, or fettered through *fear*, *influence*, or *obligation* ; that is no choice even if the objects presented exceeds in number the sand of the sea ; thus it is with *good* and *evil* ; if God is more powerful than Satan we have no choice ; if Satan is more powerful than God, we have no choice, as far as relates to virtue or vice ; for being so forcibly impelled by powers the one *Infinite*,
and

and the other *Eternal*, we are constrained to give way either voluntarily or reluctantly to the powerful impulse.

These are part of the lamentable consequences annexed to the grand revolution, as far as affect the state of man, in his subordination to the working machinations of the *wicked one* ; we now come to treat more particularly of those entailed upon himself and disciples.

According to the general opinion of his continual “*walking about seeking whom he may devour*,” it must be taken in a figurative sense ; for in a literal phrase it is a plain degradation of *Almighty* clemency and love towards mankind ; there is no connective congruity of mercy between our *Maker* and us ; consequently, I venture to give my opinion after this manner. That Satan is now in confinement, and feeling such a portion of *Almighty* wrath as it is the will of *God* to inflict until the day of general conflagration, and everlasting judgment ; but being a spirit have not lost the power of working and operating upon the faculties of men or angels ; but the *Angels in glory* that have already withstood his insinuating addresses and iniquitous schemes, are now far above the reach of his turbulent seducements ; and of course all his stratagems of evil and disobedience, are directed towards us of this lower world, as being at a more remote distance from *God* and more easily to be prevailed upon,

upon, and as his diabolical efforts did unfortunately predominate over our first parent, we may be justly styled *imps* of the *Devil* or children of Belial, for the curse was denounced on Adam and all his posterity; *all his posterity* would not been included in the declaratory edict, had it not been a sin of an hereditary entailment; consequently, our natural tendency to evil, acts upon us as a stimulative to embrace every opportunity of a gratifying nature to do that which brings to our deluded conceptions the most pleasing sensations; regardless of the consequences of good or evil; but daily and hourly experience convince us, that it is the latter which is most alluring and most cheerfully embraced, and nothing less can be expected, when our instigator, promoter, and seducer is the *Father* of all evil.

Satan by his own fall, feels wofully the weight of *Almighty* vengeance; and though he can by his soothing allurements entice mankind, it cannot amount to any more than powerful enticements; for we have the inviting encouragement of the *Divine Spirit* to counterbalance those temptations; and as both good and evil spirits have power to act upon our senses according to their different natures, we have as many opportunities to receive spiritual consolation and improving graces from the former, as we are tempted and inclined to evil from the latter; and in my opinion *many* more; but the present gratifications which are the immediate enjoyments of the one, do annoy and obstruct our
pursuit

purfuit after the promifed inheritance of the other ; one being prefent and fhort enjoyment ; the other reverfionary and everlaftingly triumphant.

This natural depravity and pronenefs to iniquity, of which we all fo frequently complain, is in the proper definition of language, “ *the Devil walking to and fro the earth,*” for until we are renewed and become new creatures, we are ourfelves *Devils* ; there can be but two appellations given to *Spirits*, perfect or imperfect ; that is, children of *God*, and children of *Satan* ; and that which we *follow*, *adhere* unto and ferve, muft be our *nominal* (for the *Devil* cannot be our *actual*) Father or *creating* parent ; fo that we make a very rueful exchange, by forfaking our creating and original Father, for a vain deceiving adopted Father,

How miferably deplorable muft be the irremediable fituation of the revolting crew, or fallen angels, that no fooner convicted, but immediate fentence paffed, and execution took place ! how many revolving years and ages have taken their progrefive rotations fince the woful commencement ; fince the irrefufable edict paffed from the *Infinite Majeflic One* ; he fpoke the word ; “ *I will there fhall be a HELL !*” and *Hell* became ! and every neceffary concomitant of torment proceeded the thundering voice ! once happy fpirits inconceivably glorious, confined in the gulf of darknefs, fire and pain ; not even a beam of fplendid light, or ray of glimmering

ing hope, as an administering cordial of consolation to dispel or alleviate their excruciating torments ; nothing before them but the dismal prospect of increasing misery ; even Satan himself, the grand conductor of the first apostates, is by Almighty prohibition prevented from making the least excursion beyond the boundaries of slow, piercing and endless destruction ; continually feeling the tortures of a lingering death ; and never experiencing the pleasing satisfaction of an approaching annihilation ; perplexed with an incessant prospect of the beautiful and harmonious regions of Heaven, and bewailing with the exquisite anguish of unceasing torments his everlasting exclusion from it ; *an awful memento this ; to rouse mankind from a state of supine inactivity ! to the diligent exercise of watching and prayer, to escape the increasing and miserable agonies of Satan and his crew, that will unremittingly burn as fuel, with renewed vengeance of God, for ever and ever, and evermore without end !* I am very sensible that this closing paragraph is strongly opposed by a popular Author ; but as the principal part of this work was in manuscript more than twenty years ago, long before his work, or even any other of those modern publications that have of late been the cause of unprofitable animadversion and controversy, he hope he shall escape the censure of unjust criticism ; as he is only giving his own opinion as they have gave theirs ; and in any respect where his sentiments may not coincide with them, he requires no farther indulgence, or lenity than

than brotherly charity, by being allowed *liberty of conscience* ; if he cannot subscribe to a *universal glorification*, neither can they to a *divided* one ; and I think it is a matter very insignificant to controvert about ; for we all know that to make our *calling and election* sure, we must run with *faith and patience* ; *prayer and penitence* ; “ *the race to glory that is set before us* ;” and whether *hell* will, or will not be everlasting, it is our wisest and most advantageous method to be pursued to endeavour to secure unto ourselves a seat in *Heaven*, without being sentenced to any probationary purification in *hell* at all : It appears to me to be a dangerous adventure : I fear *hell* will never produce many *heavenly saints*.

I beg the indulgence of every author that is gone before me, to consider that I am only advancing my own private opinion, unconnected with sect, party or denomination, as far as relates to the publication of this work : I am not raising objections to their belief, for they have the same right to print theirs as I have mine ; and consequently, I shall not intrude upon my readers with any further apologizing digressions, for I have no desire to foment disputation, but to enlighten the understanding, and remove from the minds of mankind, many engrafted traditional errors, that “ *unity, peace and concord*” may abound amongst us ; and religious animosity in some measure removed, to the glory of *God*, promoting *Christ’s* cause, and the good of our own souls.

Satan,

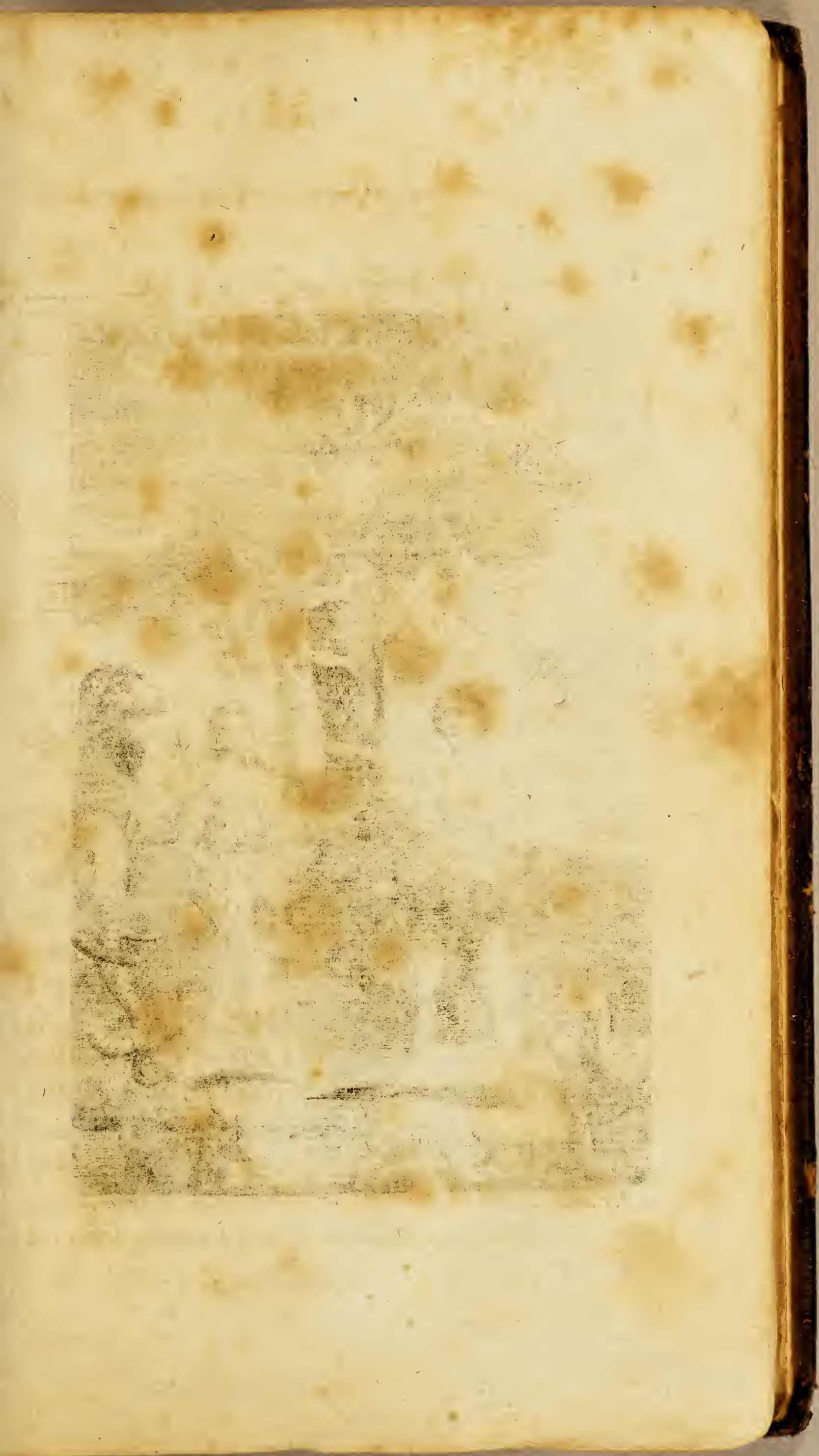
Satan, who in reality can receive no advantage from his temptations, or alleviation of his misery, has no other prospect in view than to increase the number of the miserable, and frustrate, as far as possible, in his present limited degree, or confined state, the wise and good purposes of *God*, by exerting all his machinations and malevolency, to insinuate corrupt ideas into the minds of men, and render abortive the future ordinations of the Almighty ; not proceeding altogether from enmity to mankind, as much as implacable malice against *God*, and the holy Angels that refused to associate with him in his diabolical enterprise ; the more numerous his vassals or captives from this lower world, the greater his pleasure (if there can be a union, of pleasure, and unceasing torments.)

My dear *friends* and *brethren* of this world ; we all know that the inflictive curse of *Heaven* extends not only to Satan and his immediate crew, but to all his future followers ; our present residence in this world is only a probationary evidence of our attachment either to our *Maker*, or our *Tempter* : the *promised* and *threatened* rewards annexed to their respective servitudes, are not only recorded, but plainly demonstrated to the weakest capacity that have any desire towards an attainment of this knowledge. We have the bible before us ; and I believe every transaction *Moral* or *Divine*, *Prophetical*, *Priestly* or *Apostolical* therein recorded to be true, and in due time *have been*, and will be accomplished ;

accomplished ; but the many seeming contradictions that aboundeth, and so stagger the faith, and produce such discordance and diversity of opinions and commentations amongst us ; proceedeth from mistranslations, oral traditions, and the blind zeal of bigotted prejudice ingrafted into us by our natural parents ; this is one of the best instruments that Satan can employ to keep us in darkness, and secure us to himself ; for where there is no brotherly harmony and love in worship ; there must on the contrary be discord and strife ; and these two inconsistent appellatives is the rise of all evil ; for if we was to be united in one band of community, and all encounter Satan with the same weapons, he would be weary of tempting, and we should be free from temptations ; and thus the purposes of our *Maker* in creating us would be accomplished to his own *glory* and our own *everlasting* happiness. I conclude the chapter by advising my readers to a serious consideration of the two extremes of enjoyment ; the pleasures of Satan here for *sixty years* ; or the proffers of *God* hereafter, for *six million of millions of years*. Oh ! that I could hear the whole world say in one united voice, like good old *Joshua*, xxiv. 15. “*For me and my house, we will serve the Lord*” and to effect this salutary end, the bible must be read for *improvement* instead of *employment* ; for it is easier to read ten chapters, than to comprehend ten verses ; and such pious endeavours the *Great Author* will sanctify with revealed blessings.

BOOK







R. Cotton, invt.

Scobers. sc.

B O O K II.

Chap. I.

The CREATION.

THE decrease of heavenly inhabitants, and frustration of the *Eternal* will of *God*, from the effects of the revolution, produced a great deficiency in the habitation of glory, and caused a vacuum in the mansions of bliss; the Almighty was disposed to renew this lost multitude of fallen Angels. In this case *Divine* wisdom was employed, and *Infinite* judgment displayed. Now according to our finite and scanty conceptions of eternal transactions; I think we may reasonably conclude (without degrading the *Majesty* of the *most high and holy one*) that a council was summoned in heaven between *Father*, *Son*, and *Angels* for the replenishing the *kingdom of heaven* with spirits equally pure and holy, with the immaculate angelic hosts. We know the result of this council. *It was willed; and it is done!* creation was concluded upon and modern nature

nature became an existing perfection (and as the sacred writings expressly records) in the space of six days ; there certainly was no necessity for the Almighty to complete it in this time, or to require this time for its completion ; but it proceeded from his own self-existing pleasure and unerring will, having wisely *decreed* it for the purposes most suitably adapted to the state and nature of the mortal frame, that he intended as a concomitant with the spirits he proposed to create ; by appointing six days for the necessary provisional employments of nature ; and on the seventh to rest ; for a relax from needful exercise, and to dedicate the essential parts to our *Maker's glory*, preparatory to our reception into the seat of the *Most High and Holy One*.

In this sublime and wonderful architecture of nature ; Angels might look down from Heaven with admiration and renew their praise with increasing celebrations ; and in loud acclamations of joy, join in concordant hallelujahs to their *Great Jehovah* ! in uniform regularity was this great basis of variegated and expanded nature, compacted with the most accurate adjustment and exactness of symmetry ; wisely disposed, and proportioned according to the composition of unerring *Infinity* and *Eternal* wisdom ; fixed on the rock of a permanent and continual uniformity ; and providentially was this wide and extended orb of magnificent benevolence bountifully and liberally supplied with millions and millions of different productions, all calculated for the

the service, the enjoyment, and delight of these new created *Spirits* or *Angels* apparent ; and every minute particle of living or inanimate matter answered the purpose of its creation ; or the Creator would not pronounced it all “ *very good* ;” and nothing of all these mighty works of *God*, have since the creation disgraced their *Maker*, by blemishing their own nature ; but the *nominal Lord* of this creation ; *Man* ! and the *Serpent*,

If we ponder upon the confused and irregular mass of abyss of existing *nothing*, the wisdom of the original framer, and uncontrouled parent of nature, in the framing, forming, and composing this wonderful fabric of diversities, and the munificence and excellence of the work ; *how we are lost, and overwhelmed, with awful astonishment* ! where could be collected the multiplicity of essential materials for the erection, stability, and furnishing this lower world ? from whence could be extracted the substantial matter to produce the amazing variety of nature’s liberal productions ? could inanimate *chance* first *make*, and afterwards promiscuously jumble together millions and millions of objects into a state of exact regularity and niceness, and every thing in its kind proportionably calculated for some salutary, and beneficial purpose for the service of man ? I say, could *chance* do this ? wonder all ye that mock your *Maker* ! hang down your heads and mourn, all ye that do not worship
your

your *God* ! be ashamed, and tremble, all ye prophaners, sabbath breakers, Deists and Atheists.

This is a mystery, but not "*past finding out*," nothing but the *will* of the *Great* "*I AM WHAT I AM*," was required, and this incomprehensible work was accomplished ; Fire, Earth, Air, and Water he willed ; and the four Elements immediately existed. The sky became illuminated and bespangled with different degrees of brightness, and limited in its progress by Divine appointment : every element has got its appointed course, and jointly, and separately pay obedience to the *Almighty* mandate ; their regular operations, and effectual influence upon nature, are all ordained ; the injunctions are faithfully observed ; the edict is never subverted ; could *chance* exercise such authority ? could *chance* enjoin such obedience ? could *chance* enforce such injunctions ? or could *chance* so wisely *decree* such necessary restrictions ? revolving seasons take their annual circuits, and nature derive benefit from the enriched soil, and every element in uniformity, punctually renders its benign influence towards creation's fertility ; and every intrinsic virtue displayed, agreeable and in conformity to the original institution of the Creator, for the replenishment of this world. *Chance*, must here give way to *wise* ordinations, and bid adieu to presumption ; wisdom seems here to be arrived to its height of perfection : powerful *Infinity* stimulates nature, and all its innumerable

numerable productions conjunctively unite in celebrating the unsearchable greatness of the *Eternal Actor*.

Compacted nature is now sublimely completed, and universal excellence expandeth its beautiful ornaments throughout the new formed system of creation ; *all was very good* ; now says, the *Great and Almighty One* ; nature is complete. Let us finish creation's work by creating MAN, after *our own* image, and enduing him with every needful qualification to reign as supreme head with power uncontrouled, over *all the works of creation*, and to administer unto his future occasional need our *heavenly* providences ; *Jehovah* spoke the word, and Adam became a "*living soul* ;" the first new formed *Angel* of creation, ordained as the natural parent of future *Angels* in the flesh ; from the native soil of his own future dependance, and from whence he was to receive all the needful requisites to sustain, and support nature ; he himself was formed ; the earth he trod upon was his own original parent : thus wisely did the Almighty Creator ordain that he should have no plea of justification to despise, or scornfully triumph over any part of his *Maker's* works : for not a reptile that crawls upon the face of the earth can be upbraided with a more ignoble or humble extraction ; to be formed from the very *dust* of the earth, that is polluted, and defiled with the *refuse* and *scum* of the meanest *insect* that creation produce.

Thus

Thus did the Allwise Architect of nature appoint, and prepared Adam for the cultivation of humility, and taught him to know what *he was*, what *he must be*, and what hereafter he intended he *should be*; and thus to overcome the temptations of the Devil by self reflections on his own insignificancy, and future expectations; that pride and delusive ambition might not predominate, and he also like Satan and his followers, fall a victim to disobedience and rebellion.

Thus was our primogenial parent situated, and circumstanced, with Eve his help mate in the most beautiful spot of creation; surrounded with every gratifying and necessary delight to constitute their temporal happiness, and secure future *glory*; and we have sufficient reason to conclude that the *Arch-Angels* was permitted by the Almighty to make occasional descents in the appearance of visionary spirits to forewarn Adam against the artful temptations of the busy intruder, and the better to prepare him against his repeated assaults; at the same time encouraging him with the future fruition of endless felicity; otherwise, Adam would not been capable of judging of the difference between good and evil; death, and life; *heaven*, and *hell*; present, and future happiness; and the snare that Satan laid for him I apprehend was an immediate enjoyment of those pleasures that by the *Arch-Angels* was promised only in reversion, upon condition of obedience.

Adam

Adam in his state of purity was capable of conversation and communing with *angels*, and undoubtedly did for a considerable time : It is very probable that Adam's temptations were very powerful and frequent as well as attracting to human nature ; and the one precise covenant, particularly expressed in scripture, between *God* and Adam, was easy to be broken, and at the same time deliciously tempting : Adam certainly had manifested instances of a transgressing inclination, and shewn a tendency to embrace Satan's temptations, and offend his *Maker*, before this last *easy* trial of his obedience was had recourse unto ; this last injunction and command, was so easily to be observed, and the breach of it a guilt of so aggravated nature, that his original title to *Almighty* clemency, mercy and lenity was forfeited ; and as he thus lost his *Maker's* favour by impiety, he should regain it by laborious penitence ; and I believe the Almighty repented that he had made *one man* ; this much we are convinced of, that by this *one* act, original righteousness was lost ; and obedience to this *one* command, being by his *Maker* so peremptorily enjoined would have annulled from the records of *Heaven* all former desires for, or real actual commissions of sin, in *thought*, *word*, or *deed* ; and secured not only himself, but all his posterity the happiness of heaven's beatitudes and glory, for ever and ever ; but melancholy the reflection ! a death from primitive purity took place of original perfection, and involved us all in the fatal catastrophe ;

and

and being thus deprived of the communion of Angels, we have got our angelic privileges, and blessings, to recover by prayer and penitence ; and glory be unto the name of the Lord, that he will not withhold his mercy from the supplicating sinner.

Adam's perseverance in obedience, without the actual commission of the trespass, would been productive of the following salutary, and advantageous effects. The influence of his *Maker* through the channel of angelic *spiritual*, as well as *personal* communications would never been withheld from him ; he would always have experienced a sufficiency of aid in time of need ; and in the midst of the most trying conflicts with his enemy, would found proportionable support, to enable him to have rendered the evil machinations of the grand deceiver abortive ; this would been the beneficial consequences to all future generations ; but *woful* ! it is too late to recall the forfeited possession ; but *joyful*, it is not too late to recover the promised inheritance ; every son and daughter of Adam have offended, and every son and daughter of Adam have the proffered mercy extended ; our *Maker* decrees nothing with partiality, or injustice ; he would not include *all* in the fall, and exclude *one* from the recovery ; the *Gates of Heaven* are extended to all comers.

In the garden of Eden it is said our first parents were placed, and in the *midst* of this garden were

two Trees, of *one* of which Adam was not to eat ; this was all the command ; this was all the injunction ; and it must be granted a very easy restriction to abstain from *one* food, or fruit, at the same time surrounded with abounding sweets, and delicious necessaries of all kinds ; and the reflection must, or at least ought to be very awful, very solemn, and very impressive upon a considering soul, to ruminate upon the melancholy, and deplorable consequences issuing from a sin to all human conception of so trifling a nature ; but when we consider of the *majesty* of this *law giver*, the sin immediately swells to an enormous magnitude ! and especially if we add unto it Adam's former repeated aggravations, as I think we may very candidly suppose he was guilty of many ; although this *one* trial of his simple obedience conveys to our ideas of *Heaven's* justice, and love ; a guilt, adequate to the *everlasting* infliction annexed unto it.

From the effects of Adam's unguarded, (or what I am inclined to think ; wilful) folly, the birth-right of heaven was forfeited, and the principal effects issuing therefrom to future generations is ingrafted *ingratitude* ; for there is not a sin we commit, but takes its rise from *ingratitude* to our *Maker*.

The command of *God* to Adam relating to the fruit of this Tree, as his prohibition on the one hand, and promise on the other, was the *first decree* of

of the *Almighty* appertaining to human souls : if Adam transgressed, his posterity “ *by natural generation fell with him ;*” here the *decree* of God was universal without exception ; and such as remained in a state of impiety and sin, should experience the miserable doom of Satan, and his crew ; and those that by *prayer* and *penitence* observed the commandments of God with faithfulness and integrity, should enjoy those reserved *glories* in *heaven*, for which mankind was first created : here are *two* decrees of God, which includes *all* mankind without respect of persons ; consequently, before the Flood ; between that and the coming of *Jesus Christ* in the flesh, and since our Saviour’s time, all mankind are under the necessity of repentance, for all are born in sin, and all do commit iniquity. Infants, whose capacities are immature, whose faculties are not capable of comprehending the nature of Satan’s temptations, and whose intellectual powers do not enable them to judge between good, and evil, are undoubtedly exempted from the general curse ; we must observe it was not an *eternal* death, totally to exclude a redemption from *hell*, that was denounced as the effects of Adam’s disobedience ; but a spiritual death from *original* righteousness ; so that it is very uncharitable to entertain such unfavorable opinions of the death of children ; *that original* sin itself is a *just* condemnation : it is not being *born* of sinful parents ; but growing and persevering in sinful courses, that entails upon us *everlasting* misery. I am not ashamed to avouch
it

it as my creed, that every child incapable of sin, by actual, and designed transgressions, will at the great day of tribunal be received into glory, without the form, or process of trial ; neither do I think it would be an absurd opinion to say, it is more than probable they are by transmutation, removed from *Earth* to *Heaven* instantaneously ; for if they make their appearance at the bar of everlasting justice with the confused mass of souls of all descriptions to give an account of the deeds done in the body, whether they were good, or whether they were evil : What can they answer ? they never experienced, or knew the enjoyment of either ; and for the original sin of Adam their forefather, they rely on the *mercy* of their *God*, and atonement of their *Saviour* whom themselves never offended, in *thought*, *word*, or *deed*.

How deplorable must be the situation of Adam and Eve ! how impressive must be the reflection when they heard the angry voice of *God*, and heard the sound of banishment from his presence ; to be drove from the *Garden of Eden* where their *Mak-er's* condescending presence, or voice, frequently revived their souls ; and probably never after this did the *Lord* by himself, or his *Angels*, deign to solace them, or administer any farther consolation than what was in future displayed by divine inspiration to future generations.

We

We have every reason to suppose that Adam became an upright convert and penitent for that sin ; having no record that mention any other guilt, or inclination to evil ; and his youngest son presenting his sacrifices more acceptable to the *Throne of Grace* than the elder, indicates a degree of religious attainment peculiar to him preferable to Cain ; for which reason we ought from a principal of fellow love and feeling, judge and hope favourably of Adam ; that he endeavoured to train up his children righteously ; and initiate into their puerile years a love for every moral, and religious virtue : for by sad experience, he knew they was under the power of death, and temptations of Satan. Adam lived to a good old age, to see his children's children to the seventh generation ; and the second generation following was drowned in the general deluge : we read but of *two* men whose years exceeded those of Adam, and these were both living in his days ; an incontestable evidence that Adam's future years after his transgression, was devoted in a sensible measure to the duties of religion and virtue ; for he seemed to be blessed with a numerous offspring and undoubtedly closed his days in peace : what most probably produced the most severe and weighty reflections to his soul, and im-bittered his days with occasional self-reproach ; was the woful consequences that issued from his guilt in the *Garden of Eden* : The murdering of his *second* by his *first* born son ; and Cain being doomed to a life of wandering vagrancy by his *God* : it is

to be doubted whether Adam ever saw him afterwards ; and this must be an additional grievance to his soul, when his mind in a state of calm composure was prepared for serious contemplation upon the benevolent dispensations of his Creator's providence, in his many unforeseen circumstances of life : when *Seth* was born, Adam was an hundred years old ; and Eve seemed to rejoice with thankfulness for this son in place of *Abel*, "*whom Cain slew :*" now from this mark of Eve's gratitude, we may conclude that Adam and Eve had no other child at that time, and Cain being gone from them with the curse of *God* upon him ; it must certainly create in them a joyful transition from settled melancholy, to unbounded cheerfulness, and the numerous increase of his family proceeding this interval, leaves no room for any unfavourable conjectures, but that Adam lived in peace with his Creator, and died in favour with his *God*.

CHAP.

Chap. II.

Of the Two TREES,

The TREE of KNOWLEDGE and TREE of LIFE.

GOD having out of his mere good pleasure, and Infinite wisdom, appointed the *Tree of Knowledge*, as a sacred and binding covenant between himself and Adam; the woful consequence of a breach of this engagement was declared unto him, and the entailed curse issuing from it was fully manifested unto him by *God* his Creator: whether or not the Tree itself, or the fruit upon it, was more alluring, or pleasingly attractive than any other tree in Eden, we have no prop whereon to rest our speculations, or conjectural conclusions, nor from any scriptural tradition have we room to imagine it was so; I think the intrinsic virtue of the Tree consisted entirely in the efficacy of the *Almighty* prohibition; the obedience or disobedience of Adam to the express command of *God*, the only powerful effects that could be produced from it; for a submissive observance of, or willing obedience to *God's* law, or perverse transgression of it; conveys to our imaginations much more powerful considerations

siderations of wilful offence, than barely tasting a fruit, that probably might be very tempting and alluring. It is certainly recorded in sacred writ that Eve said "*the Tree was pleasant to the eyes and good for food ;*" but no evident proposition can be deduced from these words more than this. She knew the Tree was forbidden, and her natural incentive for the gratification of her curiosity, prompted her to a violation of God's commandment. I believe our Parent Mother was not acquainted with the forcible effects that was annexed to the transgression ; nor had neither heard the injunction delivered by God, or received it from her husband with the needful impressive impulse upon her conceptions ; and being thus a stranger to the nature of the inflicted curse, foresaw no farther ill effects resulting from her disobedience, than a mere simple act of nonconformity to the *precept* of Adam ; and it is to be doubted, whether Adam's manner of relating the command of God, did even amount to a *precept*, but merely a few words of course, or at most, as words of communicative intelligence, as joint partner, and assistant to him in his deliberations ; whether he should, or should not *eat, or taste, this forbidden fruit* ; we may naturally conclude that his inclination was bent towards transgression, and that his obedience and restraint hitherto, proceeded more from fear of his Creator's anger, than cheerful conformity to his *will* ; or he would not have received from his wife and *eat*, after the express prohibitory command of God, and
his

his own authoritative restriction upon her : if this had been the case, and the covenant between him and his *Maker* properly impressed upon his considerations ; instead of complying with her request (if she did even request it) he would have manfully reprov'd, and rebuked her ; and instead of a weak acquiescence, and frail compliance, would sorrowfully, and almost scornfully rejected the baneful allurements, and humbled himself before *God* to implore forgiveness for the wife of his bosom : but so far from this, he partook of the tempting bait, and afterwards joined in the aggravating guilt. He said “ *I was naked and hid myself ;* ” a poor substitute for penitence ! a vain delusive attempt to hide himself from his *Maker*, that saw him before himself knew that he was ! a poor insignificant plea to an offended *God* ; when the *Lord* called to him in the Garden ; “ *Where art thou ?* ” “ *I heard thy voice and I was afraid ;* ” a self evident concomitant of a guilty conscience ; again, another weak justification of his imprudent and sinful conduct following ; the *Lord* said unto him ; “ *Hast thou eaten of the Tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat ?* ” he answered ; “ *the woman thou gavest to be with me she gave me of the Tree, and I did eat.* ” Here Adam forfeited all his right of dominion over the woman in two senses ; by not preventing her through the power of his authority from eating the fruit, or rebuking her with becoming austerity when she had done it ; instead of being weakly prevailed upon to fall into the same snare,

snare, and become an accessary in the same crime ; this amounts almost to a demonstration, that the man was equally guilty with the woman ; and hesitated no more to take the fatal gift from her hand, than she did to give ear to the first deluder, and very probably not so much ; consequently, for all the bitter reflections accompanying this original offence, to be from generation to generation, cast upon the woman as the first aggressor, and the source of all our evils ; borders very much upon severe, and unjust imputations ; for although Eve was the first transgressor in *act*, it is probable she was not in *thought* ; neither did her guilt involve future posterity ; it was Adam that broke the Law ; it was Adam that entailed the curse ; and had the injunction been delivered to Eve, and as weightily enforced upon her understanding by *God*, as it was upon Adam. Who dare venture to say that sin would have entered the world by *eating the forbidden fruit* ? Let us suspend our judgment, and partial accusations, and entertain charity for our original mother parent, and forgive her, *her* trespass, as we pray unto our Heavenly Father to forgive us our trespasses.

Adam was the original parent of generations unborn, the pure and perfect primogenial of men ; placed on this lower orb for the increase of his kind, and for the propagation of holy and righteous souls to supply the deficiency of angelic rebels, to replace the revolting backsliders : this salutary end
would

would been accomplished, and the wise ordinations and purposes of the *Infinite One* fulfilled, if Adam had not fell from *his* original righteousness, by *eating the forbidden fruit*, and thereby his eyes was opened to carnality and sensual lust, and his understanding enlightened, to know, and discern Satan's devices, and draw a fatal distinction between good, and evil; evil was now compounded with his good, and the flesh for the first time began to war against the spirit; so that he now had two duties instead of one, to be jointly, and separately discharged. One was to serve his *Maker* with penitence and praise; and the other to shun the Devil, with contemptible scorn.

This was the effects of eating the forbidden fruit; the knowledge of *good*, and *evil*, or a capacity to understand, and a corrupt will (proceeding from disobedience) to close with Satan's devices, and attracting temptations; and thereby incapacitating himself to answer the purposes of his creation with undefiled purity, and perfect integrity; because he had attained unto a knowledge that only contributed to make him the more unknowing of that which was most needful for him to know. *His duty to his Creator.*

The Tree of Life. We have two trees spoke of in the Mosaical account of the Creation, and we have as good reason to credit the *Tree of Life*, as we have the *Tree of Evil*. There is scarcely any person,

person, even the most unlearned, but what do, or at least pretend to form their ideas and understanding upon our first parent's *eating the forbidden fruit*; by which sin came into the world, and death by that sin; but of the *Tree of Life* we are left in obscurity; because nothing more is said of it than that the *Lord* removed Adam from the garden of Eden, that he should not also take of that tree, "*and live for ever.*" Of this tree we can only *surmise, speculate, and conjecture*; it appears to my apprehension that this must be a tree of *Divine Light*: a tree planted by *God* for some future manifestations of his wisdom and goodness to Adam, and his posterity, if he had persevered in his original integrity; I am inclined to think, that had not sin entered the world by Adam, the Devil never would have been powerful enough to prevail over the moral rectitude of future generations, nor sin never triumphed over the minds of men; and that the *Tree of Life* would have been a continual token between *God* and man, that he should never die, not even a natural death; but, like Enoch be translated, or like Elijah be taken up into Heaven, without any regard to times, or seasons, *when, where, and how*, it was most agreeable to the *Divine* will; so that the term "*live for ever,*" is very applicable, and proper; because it would only be a transition from a life on earth, to a life in heaven; for there would be no need of a *resurrection* day, or *tribunal* day, if there was no criminals to be convicted.

Again,

Again, how was Adam to receive such advantage by touching this tree as to, "*live for ever*," after he had *sinned*, and brought the curse upon himself, and posterity? the former part of our corrolary may be deducible to plain reason, but this point is certainly more abstruse, and more difficult of definition; but even here, if we divest ourselves of prejudice, and partial sentiments, we may reap advantage from our contemplations, and improving ideas.

The ways of God are "*past finding out*;" the *depth of his wisdom is unsearchable*! if we believe the sacred record, we must believe there was such a tree; that if Adam had touched, or eat of it, he would have "*lived for ever*;" from this I conclude we may deduce the following supposition, that this tree was endowed with a peculiar virtue above all other trees; a virtue of a restorative, or preventive nature; its component parts having a salutary tendency towards the preservation of the human frame from maladies, and a balsamic quality peculiar unto it of a mollifying nature, that by the touch, or (I believe more properly speaking) the tasting of it; any bodily calamity proceeding from the inordinate irregularities and imprudence of intemperance, or defects of human nature, would be as instantaneously removed, as the Israelites did escape immediate death, by looking on Moses's fiery serpent; and if Adam had continued in a course of uprightness and integrity in observing the commandment

mandment of the *Lord* ; there would been no necessity for the *Lord* to have removed him from Paradise, because being himself, and his family, and generations issuing from him, all in a state of perfect purity, and holy community with their *Maker*, and the heavenly hosts ; they might have partaken of the beneficial, and salubrious efficacy of the tree, as conformable to the ordination, and wise decrees of *God* ; to heal them of the infirmities, and calamities incident to their human nature, that their mortal frames should not fall a sacrifice to either of those numerous maladies that while in the flesh they might be subject unto ; and in this sense might be said to “ *live for ever*,” because they would never have tasted death ; but if Adam still had the opportunities of a recourse to this tree after his sin, it is probable he would never had *died* the death of mortality, but still have lived as a curse to the earth, and at enmity with *God* ; for the Devil would without doubt been vigilant, and diligent to have insinuated into the mind of Adam, the virtue of the tree, and of course hardened his mind against the impulse of conviction, and the tender impressions of conscience ; with the vain and delusive expectations of everlasting existence in this created world, and thus lulled him into a carnal security, thoughtless, and fearless of his Creator’s frowns, or displeasure.

If Adam had remained in his original state of purity, and not tainted himself, or posterity with
corrupted

corrupted degeneracy, we have no room to doubt but that a continual increase of "*the Tree of Life*" would have followed in succession, and produced seed after its kind in regular rotation, for the benefit of mankind to the end of the world ; *as a balm of gilead to their wounded, and afflicted bodies.* I conclude, that our mortal frames would been equally subject to the incident vicissitudes, and circumstantial changes of the world as it is at present ; but being free from sinful, and inordinate desires, and lustful inclinations, the produce of creation would not proved so generally baneful, as from our evil concupiscence and abuse of it, we unfortunately experience it to be : the calamities of bodily feeling I imagine would been no more than the effects of the *heavenly* mutations, or revolving seasons, making their gradual circuits according to *divine* appointment ; that every herb, and plant would been good either for food, or remedy in conjunction with the "*Tree of Life,*" which tree I imagine would been calculated for the most emergent cases ; as a speedy, immediate, and responsible antidote against the most unfavorable symptoms of approaching maladies : consequently, it is obvious to my ideas, and sentiments of the antideluvian world before sin gained a lamentable entrance ; that mankind would still experience the effects of *mortal*, though not of *sinful* afflictions, or at least been subject unto them ; but in the more proper definition of the phrase, not to experience the present miseries of them, because they would been
endued

endued with a proportionable measure of righteous wisdom, to have resorted to the proper fountain, to drink of the healing waters of undefiled creation : they would then have known what pure, and uncorrupted wisdom was, and possessed the same wisdom that the irrational creatures of the creation do at this time : been able to distinguish between *God's* wonderful works of nature ; what was good and calculated for food ; and what was good, and essential for the purpose of remedy : in this respect we are beneath the most despicable reptile that twisteth on the face of nature : the very *worm* under our feet can give us instructive lessons on this head, and direct us by the paths of prudence to shun dangers that we may not fall into evil : how much better it is to prevent a misfortune, than to search for a remedy afterwards ; and particularly us, who are the most ignorant of all breathing creatures upon the face of the earth, or in the waters under the earth ; of those things that are applicable towards sustaining nature, and removing her various, and many accidental disasters.

It do not appear that Adam's sin, or the curse accruing from it, did in any measure affect the inanimate, although it did the irrational part of creation : every thing that had life felt the fatal blow, and still groans under the smart of the incurable wound ; witness the antipathy and enmity that subsists between man, and every living creature under the sun without exception : he has the appearance

pearance of a haughty, tyrannical monarch, whose company, and approach, is detested as much for the violence with which he wounded nature, as for the authority, and dominion which he assumes : their subjection unto him proceeds more from fear than love ; that unity, and concord that originally subsisted between man and beast, is no more ; the ferocity of the Lion is substituted instead of the meekness of the Lamb, and all things in nature are lamentably changed.

I conceive, that all the produce of creation appropriated, and ordained by the *Great* wise disposer, and orderer of all things, for the sustenance, and use of man, and all other created living animals on the earth, or in the sea, do still retain its primitive virtues, unaffected with any dangerous, or baneful qualities as the result of Adam's sin, and answerable to the same salutary purposes and equally salubrious and attainable, by the irrational, and unreasonable creatures ; but woful the reflection ! to man, the most noble, and magnificent of all *God's* works, the inestimable, and invaluable virtues of the boundless productions of heaven's liberal gifts, are obscured in the maze of sinful ignorance, and entailed stupidity ; and the temporal blessings that would flow upon us by an intimate acquaintance with Nature's bountiful accomplishments, are still left in a great measure to be discovered ; and must be by laborious study, and unwearied diligence, that this needful knowledge will be attained, through

through the forfeiture of original perfect wisdom : that which was in our first created state a free gift of inheritance from Heaven, is now become a fatiguing, and painful science, to be attained only by indefatigable industry, and persevering assiduity ; in this respect we have lost that wisdom that all other inhabitants of creation still retain, and made a miserable exchange, by substituting a wisdom of evil in its place : so that we are the wisest of *God's* works in *vice* and the most foolish in *virtue* ; this is the exchange we have made ; *a life unto sin*, and *a death unto righteousness*.

The Tree of Knowledge ; I think we may with reasonable propriety conclude did no longer exist, or permitted longer to flourish ; whether there was, or was not any more trees of the same nature, or kind ; or of what nature, or kind it was, we are as equally unacquainted ; for to the Mosaical account of the world we can have no access for information ; but that it was a tree bearing fruit, we have as palpable testimony whereon to rest our credulity, as we have for the belief of any part of sacred writ ; but for any efficacious qualities peculiar unto it, as conveying superior, or additional wisdom, or knowledge to Adam more than what was originally bestowed upon him by *God*, I look upon as an erroneous construction put upon the meaning of the text ; and for calling it an Apple, we might with an equal degree of veracity (for all we know) call it a *Pear*, a *Plum*, or a *Cherry* ; but it
is

is not probable to be either of them, nor any other fruit at this time on the face of creation ; for I believe if any part of creation felt the effects of Adam's transgression as *God's curse*, it was *this Tree*, and the *Serpent* ; but in lieu of this, the *Lord* may cause to spring up many obnoxious plants, and unwholesome weeds, as a punishment, and memento to Adam, and his future offspring ; for he said, "*Curfed is the ground for thy sake ;*" here it is only the ground cursed, by bringing forth herbs, and plants, of noxious, and destructive qualities, as *thorns*, *thistles*, and other hurtful, and dangerous productions, for some wise purpose peculiar to his own unerring wisdom, and Almighty will ; and as unconnected with our researches, as consistent with the unrevealed secrets of his own unfathomable counsels : but notwithstanding, the primeval spontaneous productions of his *five days* work, as the perfect ornaments of creation, still retained their native simple, and healing virtues, as beneficial for the necessary occasions of man ; and this second produce of offensive plants, may in the literal sense of the text be called a *second Creation* ; for the earth did not yield the like before ; for they was added unto the rest as a perpetual testimonial of *God's* displeasure, and for their banefulness, as an allay to the sweets that would been otherwise always extracted from every other portion of *God's* created works ; but now being promiscuously compounded the *good*, and the *evil* ; there is the same needful precaution requisite now to guard against poisonous vegetables

vegetables and beverage in respect of the body, as there is against alluring temptations, and snares to seduce the soul; and whether our spiritual, or temporal faculties are most frequently affected, it is difficult to determine, so as to draw any consequential conclusions from it; we are not in this place descending to every minute instance of complaint, bodily or spiritually; but to take the two feelings in a general point of view, I think that *intemperance*, and *imprudence*, brings as many *disorders*, and *ailments* on the *body*, as *temptations*, and *delusions* do on the *soul*; for we must believe, that *every* instance of *intemperance* brings in a greater or lesser measure some bodily complaint; in this case there is no exception: but in the case of temptation it is quite otherwise; temptations are oftentimes exceptionable: Satan, or the world can *but tempt*; the soul is not yet wounded; the temptation must be embraced, and cherished, before the soul feel the dismal, and woful effects of it: and I hope I may venture to say, there are many temptations withstood; for it is not every one, that rejects the proffered *grace of God*, at all times; and consequently, I think we may justly deduce from the premises aforementioned the following inference; that the body do in this life experience as proportionable measure of the weight of *God's* first curse on Creation (making the proper allowance for the shortness of its exit, and incapacity of feeling, and mortality, and immortality) as the soul will in the life to come: well may we then close with our *Maker* in his *condemnation*

mination by woful experience ; “ *Cursed is the ground for thy sake, in sorrow (and pain) shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.*”

This noxious increase of the earth was sent as a *curse*, and for no other end but a *curse* ; it came with the voice of *wrath*, as a provoked infliction ; “ *Thorns, and Thistles SHALL it bring forth unto thee,*” this was an efficient omen to Adam of the appearance of something new to spring out of the earth, to which he was unacquainted ; and the appellations, or names that the Almighty gave to those new created productions of nature, conveyed without doubt, very alarming, and terrific ideas to Adam’s imaginations, accompanied as it was with the angry countenance, and thundering voice of *God*.

It is very probable that Adam may give names to all the other preternatural products of the earth, that succeeded the “ *Thorns, and Thistles,*” which I believe was the two first curses that the earth felt ; but to give my own private opinion, I do not think that ever Adam was ordered by *God*, or did of his own will give names to such plants, or herbs, that proceeded the curse, or in other words, that was the cursed produce of the earth ; but rather that they was left for posterity to nominate ; for daily experience convince us that from generation, to generation to this very time, there is not two countries, or scarcely two counties, that give pernicious

noxious plants or herbs the same appellations, and very rarely apply to them the same destructive qualities; or even capable of discerning their respective properties, whether they are *good*, or whether they are *evil*: whether they are the works of *God's* blessed *third day*; or whether they are the works of *God's* cursed *latter day*: for I am convinced by recent experience, that the same individual plant, fruit, and herb eaten in one part of Europe, is deemed obnoxious, dangerous and pernicious in another; and to bring my proofs nearer home, I have seen large quantities of a certain herb brought to Philadelphia market, and also gathered in private gardens, and partook of them as boiled vegetables, as good and pleasant, as well as wholesome, as the most nutritious produce of garden cultivation; and at the same time can avouch it for indisputable truth, that I never saw, or heard of this plant being used in Europe as food for mankind; but have known it to be thrown by loads to the dunghills, as weeds and incumbrances, as a *herb not good for food*.

From what has been said, the following inferences may be deduced from the premises: by Adam's eating the forbidden fruit, the earth was cursed with additional productions of noxious herbage: that mankind has not the discernment to draw the different distinctions, or attain to a knowledge of their respective qualities, between the first *blessed* creation, and the second *cursed* one: and lastly,
that

that all the living creatures on the face of the earth, in some measure feel the fatal effects issuing from the first transgression, by becoming subject unto, and frequently wounded with the casualties of creation's defilements, or the second created curse ; but happily for them, not being endued with rational faculties, to have a knowledge of, or desire for *good, or evil*, as connected with servitude, or reverence to their *Maker* ; they can wisely descry the difference between plant and plant, and apply the most salutary to their accidental ailments ; they never knew sin, and by the pure guidance of natural instinct they are led to choose good, and remain totally unacquainted with evil : they know how to extract the virtues of the pure, and to shun the evil, or hurtful produce of creation.

CHAP.

Chap. III.

OF THE DEVIL.

IT is not the universal *belief*, but the universal *profession*, that the *Devil* continually “*walketh about seeking whom he may devour* :” “*walking about*” certainly implies *unrestraint* : *seeking*, also implies a searching after something that is lost, or something desirous to be found ; and the words “*whom he may devour*,” obviously implies a *power* ; a power irresistible, or a power impetuously tempting ; in either case, the object of his malice, or machinations, must be exposed to intricate dangers and difficulties ; this is a demonstrative evidence to our senses, that if the bible either of the old, or new record, be taken in a literal sense, that the Devil is not only a tempting spirit, but a *powerful*, and *unrestrained* spirit ; and the visible incongruity between this self evident proposition, and the words of St. Peter in his 2 Epistle, ii chap. and 4th verse is plain to the most illiterate readers that understand what they read ; there is a palpable ambiguity in the two phrases, Satan can neither be confined, restrained, or limited in his actions, designs or courses, while he has an uninterrupted liberty to make his daily excursions

excursions to and fro the earth, with an unbounded sway, as extensive as the boundaries of creation ; this is an incontrovertable maxim that admits of no plausible argument ; for it is professedly allowed and maintained by the writers of both old and new testaments, that Satan always is with us and can by immediate transition accompany us when, and where he please, and what may seem really more miraculous, and even surpass our credibility, is the assertion of St. Paul, in his 2 Epistle, Cor. xi. 14. “ *for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light ;*” of every thing pertaining to *transmutation, vicissitudes, or wonderful occurrences in heaven, or earth*, nothing moral, or divine of all the revealed transactions recorded in sacred writ from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelations, conveys to our ideas more impressive motives of conviction for its support and demonstration, than this untrouled power of Satan, to take upon him the similitude and resemblance of an “ *angel of light.*”

If Satan can reassume that beatifical visage that he possessed while in a state of perfective, and blissful *light and glory*, in the illuminated mansions of *heaven* in the presence of *God* ; and in this alluring, and attracting form tempt mankind ; well might we cry out in the bitterness of our souls with the disciples of *Jesus*, Mat. xix. 25. “ *Who then can be saved ?*” or we may bring our reflections to a more particular, and self concerned point, and exclaim as the gaoler did to *Paul*, and *Silas* ;
“ *What*

“*What must I do to be saved?*” Acts, xvi. 30. without deviating from the right principles of rational reasoning, we may on the basis of religious policy conclude it almost an impossibility, that an offering for sacrifice either of *Turtle Doves, Goats, or Lambs*, can be of any service in *working out the salvation* of a *Jew*, under the old law; any more than the *blood of Jesus* can purify and cleanse from original impurity in the new; while Satan is powerful to tempt, not only under the various disguises of sin in all its alluring shapes and forms, but even under that of virtue, religion, and sanctity; for wherein he resemble an *angel of light*, he must resemble an *heavenly host*; and under such attracting and promising concealments, the prospect is very cloudy and but a faint view of the *Holy mount Zion* can be expected by the children of men: the advice of St. James in his 4th chap. and 7th verse, implies an almost impossibility: “*resist the Devil and he will flee from you.*” It is necessary first for us to know how to distinguish this angel of light, from another angel of light; and unless the divine operation of God’s Spirit is manifestly displayed towards us, for revelation, it is utterly impossible that ever we can do it.

Mankind may very properly and justly reflect, and with mournful, and lamentable reflections, bewail their present deplorable situation, to be surrounded on all sides by the Devil, and his missionaries (if the expression is admissible) and under such
numerous

numerous tempting disguises, that even *Peter* himself was induced to deny his *Master*.

We may still further produce scriptural testimonies for support of Satan's roving, and wanderings to and fro the earth ; and if we give credit to the book of *Job*, we have the most weighty, and strongest impulse upon our belief, than any other evidence in the *holy* writings ; and which taken in a literal sense without any comment, or figurative construction, is really very alarming, and momentous to a serious and religious soul : *Job* i. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12th verses “ *And the Lord said unto Satan whence cometh thou ? Then Satan answered the Lord and said ; from going to and fro in the earth and walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil ? then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear GOD for nought. Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side ; thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan behold all that he hath is in thy power, only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.*”

Here

Here we have a full and precise discourse that took place between *God*, and the Devil : here we have the calumniations and requests of Satan, and the interrogatories, and answers of *God*, as correctly stated, and particularly expressed and defined, as it is possible for language to be described ; a plain, evident conversation that actually took place between *God* and the Devil ; but where, or when it happened, no author that ever I read pretends to determine ; and if we rest upon the plain literal words of the text without applying any distant similitude, or parable to our conceptions, we can draw no other conclusions from the words, but that Satan has free access, and recourse to all the works of creation, and so far from being confined in *chains till the judgment day* ; he has liberty either granted, or arbitrary, to go, and come, where, and when he please ; and can even challenge the *Great God of heaven and earth*, with the trial of patience, and holiness, of one of his favourite children ; and so far as our speculative sentiments can be depended upon in the present case, we may with weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth ; cry out with the children of Israel—Numbers, xvii. Chap. 12 verse.—“ *Behold we die, we perish, we all perish,*” for in either case, whether the Devil’s domineering prevalency proceeds from a granted license from his Creator, or is an usurped authority of his own, it is in either case, equally destructive, and prejudicial to the souls of men ; but if the former is the case we may sorrowfully sit down, and say, we are tempted
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and powerfully *tempted*, for the temptation is issued forth under the unalterable signet of our *Creator* and *Judge*.

This carries with it such inconsistency to *God's* goodness, and love to men, that in my opinion, nothing can be more repugnant to the rational understanding of reasonable beings, or contrary to the faculties of our souls, than even to suppose it was possible for the *God* of all *love*, to employ as his agent the *Devil* of all *malice*: for if we allow his permission, we cannot subtract from the agency; for the two terms are reciprocal, and will not admit of a separation; consequently, it appears to me, that the Devil is neither agent for, nor permitted by *God*, to tempt mankind, in the vulgar sense of the words, as in general understood. So much for Satan's liberty out of hell.

We come now to treat a little of his being in hell, or under *chains of darkness until the judgment day*: these are synonymous expressions, and both relate to confinement, and punishment: and the scripture language is equally explicit in many places to evince us of the truth of the assertion; we have as sufficient authority to rest our credit upon Satan's being reserved under the power of darkness until the judgment day, feeling the anguish, and bitter tortures of remorse in expectation of his approaching damnation in hell; as we have of his being at liberty,

erty, and walking to and fro the earth, to tempt, seduce, and betray mankind.

The recorded proofs in scripture are so numerous, as demonstrative evidences of his being in *both* states, that by comparing one part of *God's* revealed word with another, we are confounded in our judgment, and at a loss how to reconcile our ideas to such seeming inconsistency ; at the same time religiously careful, and timorous, of perverting the word of *God*, by misinterpretations and wrong constructions ; we readily subscribe to both principles, and comprehend neither ; and like those who are guided by an implicit religion, through the prejudice of education or secular interest, we establish our dogma of faith, upon a corollary we neither conceive, comprehend, or understand ; and thus from generation to generation, all our impurities, iniquities, transgressions, and sins, are imputed to Satan, whether they are of thought, word, or deed ; because we would wish to have a cloak to screen ourselves from guilt, it must be all attributed to his walking up and down the earth, and if this principle is allowed as orthodox, we acquit ourselves of all original imbibed evil, and quite free from the consequences of the first fall : of what hurtful tendency can it be to us, if we are *conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity* ; if no evil thought, word, or action can result from those consequences, but what is first the operating influence of Satan upon our faculties ;
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we are in this respect as free from sin, before actual transgressions, as Jesus himself; as far as relate to any crimes of immorality; for Satan being the moving, and first efficient cause, either as an agent, or permitted instrument to work upon us, before we can, or do even *will*, to be sinful, we are in this sense in the same situation as *Jesus* (is said to be) when the Devil set him upon the *pinnacle of the temple*: he was now tempted of the Devil, but being the *Son of God*, he was not conceived in sin, but brought forth in iniquity, and naturally endued with sufficient power to withstand the temptation: we differ from him in this respect; we are *conceived in sin*, and brought forth *in iniquity*; and of course we must unavoidably fall victims to the seduction of the *infernal Fiend*, unless supported and strengthened by the immediate efficacy of *Almighty Grace*.

But as we are now treating of the Devil's being in hell; how is it possible for human conception to devise any means or method for Satan to tempt us? those seeming opposite extremes of his being in hell, and out of hell, at the same time, and at all times; involves us in an embarrassment of irreconcilable perplexities; it leads us into an intricate maze of confused ideas, and after all, leaves us in an involved labyrinth of darkened mysteries; but as mysterious as it might appear, I hope, it will in the end prove not to be one of those mysteries "*past finding out*."

If the fallen Angels are reserved in darkness to the judgment day, as St. Peter and St. Jude says, (and I am inclined to their opinion) we must suppose Satan to accompany his unhappy crew, and how he extricated himself from this dungeon of remorse, is, I think, one of the greatest mysteries in the sacred writings ; and to believe as many do (and those real good Christians, and Religious, as well as learned men) that the Devil's liberty, and power upon earth to tempt mankind is appointed by God, (and even his assuming the shape of a Serpent to tempt Eve) purposely for the greater manifestation of his own *glory*, in glorifying the righteous, and damning the wicked, the more to display the power of his wisdom, and greatness ; is, to my ideas of right, and wrong, and of God's truth, and justice, as great a paradox as can be imposed upon the understanding of mankind : what affinity can a damned soul bear to the *glory of God*? What *glory* can it be unto God, to damn those souls in *hell's never ending* torments, that he created on purpose to re-occupy the vacuum of the *glory of heaven*? it is an opposition to every principle of mercy, justice, clemency and truth ; our conceptions are strained beyond the bounds of rational comprehensions, and directly impresses upon our souls, an unfavourable judgment of God's dispensations of providence. “*and good will towards men.*”

Now as we cannot reconcile our ideas to these abstruse inconsistencies, of the Devil being chained
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in darkness, and walking to and fro the earth, and appointed by *God* to tempt mankind, all at the same time ; we will endeavour in the next Chap. to elucidate this heterodoxical position, and explain the proper meaning of the various texts, that speak of these different situations and circumstances of Satan, and vindicating the *Great God of Heaven* from all unjust conclusions that may be drawn from our misinterpretations.

CHAP.

Chap. IV.

OF THE DEVIL,

As being in no measure accessory to the Sins of the World, by AGENCY.

IN the first place we must divest ourselves of all infidelity and disbelief of the *Deity* ; or in other words, *Atheism* : an *Atheist*, of all men can lay the greatest claim to the pity of the pitiful ; because he vainly professeth an unbelief of that principle, which he really trembles to reflect upon ; and believes in his conscience, what he is ashamed to avouch by his actions ; and if there is no *God* that created the world, there is a *Being*, or something, he cannot tell what, that put a moving cause into primitive *chance*, to jumble together all the heterogenous particles of compounded matter ; but because a belief in the *One Great, Infinite, uncreated and self existing God*, clashes too much with his base, carnal, and selfish nature, and brutal disposition ; he would rather reduce himself to the servility of a beast by denying an immortality, than to exalt himself to the dignity of an angel, by acknowledging a glorious
Infinity :

Infinity : for my part, I confess it to be beyond my abilities to describe a *real Atheist*, nor would not give credit to the *self-evident propositions* of any man that did *openly* avow it to be his faith ; neither can I think that ever any person in the world died a principled *Atheist* who had a warning of his change and time for reflective impressions to be made upon his soul, by the alarming approaches of death : for to be an absolute *Atheist*, is to sink beneath the very degrading appellations of the devils themselves : for they do “ *believe and tremble !*” To sum up the whole in a few words, it is morally impossible there can be a *real Atheist*, in *thought, word and deed*, disjunctive, and unacquainted with any revealed convictions.

We now return again to our proposed subject ; *the Devil* ; that he possesses no inherent powerful qualities.

God Almighty, the Father, Parent, or Creator of Heaven and Earth, uncontrouled in his will, his wisdom, and his power, must be allowed to *rule, reign and govern*, as the *One Supreme* law giver, in *Heaven and Earth*, and whose sole prerogative is the executive judgment upon sin and sinners in this world, and that which is to come ; and (if we may be allowed the expression) without controvert the world that is past : this propositional maxim granted, we have no shadow of ground to conclude that the first grand rebel, and revolter from
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his Maker, could experience such an instance of clemency, pardon, and mercy, as not only to be forgiven his presumptuous impiety, but even to be immediately reinstated into *Almighty* favour, and appointed as administering, or instrumental agent, to seduce, beguile, and betray the new created Beings, purposely intended from the purity and perfections of their image and nature, to replace himself and his cursed apostate crew in the seat of bliss, and reign for ever and ever with their *Maker* in glory: how is it possible that we can reconcile our ideas to such absurd incongruities; such plausible oppositions; such improbable, nay, *impossible* consequences; and our conceptions will be raised to a higher degree of astonishment, if we read the 41st. verse of the xxv. Chap. of Matt. an “*everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels:*” these are not the words of an apostle, a disciple, or a follower of *Jesus*, but of *Jesus* himself (and according to the general creed of Christian professors) of the *one Infinite God*, himself; but waving all general or private opinions of the *Trinity* jointly, or separately in this place; the words were uttered by one who could not *lie*, and one that will be our Judge hereafter, whether we believe, or gainsay the truth of his sacred record.

It must now be granted that a *fire* or some other punishment is reserved for the *Devil*; and as we read nothing of the other fallen angels, being liberated from their doomed place of darkness,
what

what foundation have we got to build our conjectures upon, that the *Devil*, the first promulgator, and ringleader in the *Heavenly* rebellion, should be more fortunate than the rest? this would have the appearance of the *Almighty* being, a *respector of Devils*, if he is not a *respector of persons*: I have diligently searched, and impartially examined our English translation of the Old and New Testaments but can find no proof to bias my mind to a belief, that Satan has any more liberty than his fellow revolters; and should be glad to know any reason *why* he should: I think we have more weighty reasons to imagine him to be more securely, and safely confined than the rest; if we chuse, according to our finite conceptions of this state of darkness, to make any difference in the portion of their probationary punishment; but according to scriptural revelation there are neither mansions, or degrees of distinction now, nor will be in *hell* hereafter: but every one will find his own allotted portion of its torments, sufficiently excruciating and miserable.

Having given my own private opinion as an individual, amongst the universal mass of my fellow fallible creatures, on the present state of the *Devil*: I only beg the indulgence of my readers of the liberty of *free-thinking*, without attempting to any presumptive or positive vindications of what I alledge; neither can I hinder such as are disposed for it, to make their comments, and accurate remarks upon it;
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I can only say, every one has my free liberty, though that they set out with *charity*, and close with *brotherly love* ; and to such observators I am open to conviction, and ready for instruction ; if our opinions are various, our love may still be cordial, as we are all aiming to shun the same temptations, and to arrive at the same blessed end.

We now begin with the first sin in the world : *the temptation of Eve*. I intreat the indulgence of my readers while I enter into a short detail of this *tempting Serpent* : if we believe Moses's account of the creation (and for my part I have no other tradition to go by) we have the words expressly from *God*, that it was a *Serpent*, Gen. iii. and 14. and for his offence he was cursed by *God*, and doomed to future penance, and his kind *after* him to the end of the world ; *to go upon his belly and eat dust*, and an incessant, never ending enmity should subsist *between him, and the woman's seed* ; and this inflexible anathema is still to this day irrevocably permanent between a serpent and a man : but before this denunciation of *God's* wrath, I conclude the *Serpent* walked on legs ; but what part of the animal creation he bore the strongest resemblance unto we know not ; which we might call a *mystery past finding out* ; and of no consequence : It appears to my understanding that it was a *Serpent* in the *Garden of Eden*, that tempted *Eve*, and not the *Devil* ; and I have very sufficient grounds to dwell upon, and to maintain my opinion ; for I have no
less

less authority than the very words, from the very voice of *God*; “*because thou hast done this* ;” there is no recorded testimony in the sacred writings that the Devil assumed the form of the *Serpent*, or in any measure connected with the *Serpent*, or interested, or concerned in the temptation; for the *Serpent* himself is represented unto our conceptions, as being “*more subtil than any beast of the field* ;” now if this subtility had not been an acquired property, peculiar to the *Serpent*, and distinguishable from other creatures on the creation; the infamy of *subtility*, could not with propriety be fixed upon him, nor the curse of *Heaven* be justly inflicted on him; for the Devil assuming the *Serpent*’s shape, could not affect the innocency of the *Serpent*, and of course, according to the tenor of sound reasoning, and deliberate judgment, the curse of *God* must have redounded again upon the head of Satan; for in this case, the *Serpent* would be more blameless, and consequently more innocent, than *Eve* herself; for it was only the shape, and not the faculties, of the *Serpent*, that could be affected, for he embraced no temptation; but the elucidation of this evil is obviously explained by the references already alluded unto. For “*the Serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field* ;” *Moses*, “*because thou hast done this thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field* ;” *God*. Here we have the language of *Moses*, and the language of *God*, both conspiring in this manifestation; that it was the *Serpent*, and not the *Devil*, that was the first transgressor,

gressors upon earth, and who immediately received a reward according to his deed in the *lower* world, as *Satan* did in the *higher* ; nor throughout the sacred writings do we find the *Devil*, either representing, assuming, or being called a Serpent, but in *one* place, Rev. xii. 9. and this is no more than an allegorical term of comparison between the Serpent, and Satan ; one for his impious temptation, and deception of *Angels* in *Heaven* ; the other for his *beguiling* temptation, and delusion of mankind upon earth.

From that time to the present, the Serpent has never attempted to tempt mankind ; nor the *Devil* to assume that, or any other creature for the purpose of temptation ; which we may naturally conclude he would very frequently in some pleasing, and alluring images, if he had the power ; for why not now, as well as then ; from these considerations I think we may reasonably rest upon this as a decisive point, that the *Devil* is under a severe abridgment of liberty, and restrained from farther violation of the laws of *Heaven*, either by actual transgressions there, or by authorised temptations here : Our imaginations are not strained to comprehend this, because it bears a plain recipocrity with the *will*, *wisdom*, and *power* of *God*, over the works of his own hands, in *heaven*, and on *earth* ; but to allow the *Devil* to be every day and hour running all over the world in any shape whatever ;
seems

seems to me to be a preposterous sense, or meaning, put upon the holy writings ; it is a great degradation of *God Almighty's power* ; it is robbing him of his *dignity*, and conferring it upon the Devil. Thus I have endeavoured to allow unto the *Great Omnipotent Jehovah*, the *superiority*, and *supremity* that is his due : I leave it to others to detract from him.

If it is now granted that it was the *Serpent* that tempted Eve, the next thing that comes under consideration, is, how the *Serpent* became more *subtil* than other beasts : it must not be supposed he was created so (because that would be a full acquittance from the reproach of subtilty) but as there was *sin* sprung up in *Heaven*, the origin of which we cannot trace ; why might not a similar evil spring up on earth, unless we suppose earth to be more pure, and perfect, than *Heaven* ; on earth it originated either in *Adam*, *Eve*, or the *Serpent* ; but as all blame of guilt is imputed to the *Serpent*, we will grant him to be the *first* transgressor, in *deed*, whatever our first parents may be in *thought*.

In the next place we must treat of the *Serpent's* faculty of speech. At this time, while creation was in such an infantile state, we cannot imagine there was any articulate form of language consisting of direct intelligent words ; but those indistinct sounds and motions of the voice, that at present distinguish one part of the creation from another, and every
different

different kind understand each other ; but at that time *every* living creature could by natural instinct discourse together : or how could the *Lamb* lay down with the *Lion* ; or the *Kid* with the *Wolf*, if they were unacquainted with each others' voice ; consequently, in this immethodical manner of conversation, I conclude the discourse between *Eve* and the Serpent was conducted.

The next thing to be considered is ; how should the *Serpent*, being a *beast*, have any knowledge of *God*, or the difference between *good* and *evil* ; the same proposition will hold good respecting Satan in *Heaven* : how did he know there was any distinction between him and *God*, in *dignity* or *power* ; he learnt it from the sin of evil concupiscence ; as I said in a former chap. the origin of sin, cannot be traced, and consequently, *Infinite* in its rise, and originality ; and thus the *Serpent* became wise, to become an evil adviser to *Eve* ; and for his self-accumulated knowledge at that time, he has been ever since deemed the *wisest* creature in paradise ; even our *Saviour* himself recommends to his followers the *wisdom of the Serpent* ; now if this transaction had been the works of the *Devil*, there would been no extraordinary wisdom in it ; for he that could deceive *Angels*, could undoubtedly deceive a *woman* ; but being done by a *beast* of the creation, it was a *wonderful wisdom*, though a *curfed one* ! but still the denunciation did not detract from the quality of the attribute ; and it is
very

very probable that *Adam* and *Eve* had a sinful inclination towards the fruit, but hitherto restrained from the commission; either through *fear* or *duty*.

Having now traced to the extent of finite conceptions the first rise of sin in *heaven* and on *earth*; and acquitted the *two first* propagators from any inherent power over the easy dispositions of mankind; we must now endeavour to explain the *rise* and *reign*, of our own inherent sins, or sinful inclinations.

From this first fall of our forefather we are all *conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity*, and it is impossible it can be otherwise, because every succeeding generation from *Adam* and *Eve*, must consequently be so; and although it is an unfortunate, inherent property, it never did entail *damnation* upon *Adam's* posterity, although it did the *curse* from original righteousness; for an observance of the laws and commandments of *God*, was an antidote against its miserable effects, and insured a recovery of the forfeiture of *God's* favour; of this we have many instances of the *patriarchs and prophets*, and others, *before the coming of Jesus*; consequently, *original sin* could not damn us, but a *perseverance* in that sin can; so that being *conceived* and *born* in sin, we are by nature children of the *Devil* and the *Serpent*, and from their first injection of the destructive bane into us, and *Angels in Heaven*; we may call them our *foster parents*; for lamentable to reflect upon,

we are still more ready and willing to drink the milk of their poisonous prescriptions, than we are to drink the milk of the word of *God*.

Thus mankind are prone to evil, and by nature inclined to iniquity, and without any outward temptations or allurements, we are always prepared for disobedience, because our hearts vainly elevate us above our humble state, and according as we cherish and nourish it, so it proportionably increase and flourish; until at last we are arrived to such a height, and progress in wickedness, that it is become a common proverbial expression—" *The Devil is in him,*" when the truth is, we are hastening headlong to get into *hell* to the *Devil*; consequently, it is the *Devil* in us of our own making, and not the *Devil* in darkness that tempt and seduce us to our ruin; all the temptations to be referred unto in holy writ, are only synonymous allegories, alluding to the depravity and impurity of our own willing hearts to be tempted; we have a natural tendency to evil, and always so, it is only when the *Almighty* is graciously pleased to inspire us with a ray of divine light, that we are not meditating sin.

There is but *one* place in the sacred writings that conveys to our comprehensions any plausible evidence of the *Devil* ever being seen, or heard upon the face of the earth; and that is in the *1st chapter of Job*, as I mentioned in a former chapter, and that being so far from carrying any fundamen-

tal demonstrative evidence; that the very words recorded sufficiently evince it to be no more than an allegory.

The *Almighty* ask the *Devil* where he had been? and receives an answer. The *Devil* begs permission to put Job's righteousness to the test, by destroying all that he had,—this was granted.—He next requests leave to afflict him sorely, to tempt him to sin; this was also granted; now these texts taken in a literal sense entirely confounds the bible, and leaves a considering soul in a state of confused perplexity.—In one case it is divesting the Almighty of all power over Satan, and investing Satan with power over men.—In the next place, it has the appearance of a mutual intercourse subsisting between *God* and *Satan*, and when Satan found his temptations not sufficiently efficacious to prevail upon a righteous man to sin against his *Maker* by alluring his *senses*; he is permitted, and that by *God's* free approbation, to assault his *feelings*, and wounded him grievously; if this hypothesis is granted, well might we then cry out with the disciples in Matt. xix. and 25, "*Who then can be saved?*" for we are tempted, and most powerfully tempted, and almost beyond the possibility of escaping.

This history of Job is rejected as authentic, by more commentators on the bible than any other book, or historical narrative in all the sacred writings; it is only in general believed as a relative relation to the occurring vicissitudes and circumstances

ces of our experiences, addressed to our feelings, and senses, in a similar manner to some of the parables or admonitory counsels of our Saviour to his disciples, and such comparative consequences to be deduced from it, that is, *faith in God, hope from God, and patience under God*; and these three virtues summarily comprehended, constitutes the *tryals, afflictions, and righteousness or integrity of Job*: this is the opinion of many ancient fathers, as well as learned men of our own day. Some are of opinion that it was wrote by *Moses*, while he was among the *Midianites*, but I believe it to be no more than a mere speculative conjecture, founded upon empty notions; for *Moses* at that time was but a young man, and his time and attention was engrossed by subjects and concerns that would not admit of such deliberate and thoughtful reasoning; his time was fully employed in the duties of a husband and servant to *Jethro* his father-in-law, and when there was no prospect of his being the deliverer of his brethren from the bondage of Pharaoh; but, nevertheless, I would not wish to have it understood, that I have attempted a confutation, upon any further grounds than my own private sentiments; and leave it to every one to judge, according to the dictates of their own reasoning, acknowledging that my speculations are subject to fallibility as well as theirs, but it is necessary that I give them.

It appears to me, that we have no more reason to doubt of the existence of *Job* than we have of the prophet

prophet Jeremiah or king Solomon, nor of the veracity of the circumstances therein related of him; and instead of another person writing this history of God's workings with him, I am inclined to think that Job recorded the general substance of this part of his life himself, at different times, as accidental occurrences did succeed each other, and after his death all compiled together and published, with some figurative allusions, applicable to the then present state of the world, and the compiler's or publisher's own experience; and I think most likely one or more of his own sons, or probably one of the Prophets got possession of the manuscript, and improved upon it by the addition of those instructive allusions aforementioned, as being very suitable to the nature of his own contemplative soul and experience, besides useful, and encouraging to others.

It is recorded in the new testament, Matt. iv. and 5, *That Satan set Jesus upon the pinnacle of a temple, and also upon a high mountain, and shewed him all the kingdoms and glories of the world; but the first verse of the chapter is a full illustration of this seeming mystery; "Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil:"* The Spirit here alluded unto was so much of the human infirmity as proceeded from his descending from his mother; The Virgin Mary was one of Adam's posterity, conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity; and although our Saviour was not conceived in sin, he was brought forth in iniquity, as being the adopted

adopted child of a parent that was; and it was proper he should be so, to be subject to some of the temptations incident to mankind; for if he had not been tempted, his mission could not been fulfilled, by putting his followers an example of resistance, neither could he be said to be made "*like unto his brethren, in the likeness of sinful flesh in all things*," consequently, it was needful for him to experience the same *spiritual* and *bodily pains, temptations* and *tryals*; and this he did, and in this respect did no more than what any, and every sensible soul may do that is born into the world, and arrived to discretionary understanding; that have a will and desire to be saved; for there is the same *God* to enable, the same *grace* to assist, the same *promises*, and the same *deliverance* for those that seek it, and the same *glory* for those that improve it and persevere unto the *end* in it.

As for the *Devil* taking *Jesus* up to the top of a high mountain, to shew him all the kingdoms of the earth; the very words conveys an illusive meaning, for if he had him to the *bottom of the sea*, he could have shewn it him equally as well; for as a man, *Jesus* could see no further than another, if the *Devil* could; and as *God*, or the *Son of God*, he was under no obligation to the *Devil*, to give him that which was already his own; and for supposition sake, what if he had accepted the devil's offer? I believe he would have found it a difficult matter to have fulfilled his promise. Thus I have endeavoured to
demonstrate

demonstrate, that the *Devil* and the *Serpent* are *two* distinct, separate created beings; and neither of them, since *Adam's* dismissal from Paradise, have been able to seduce or *beguile* mankind, visible or invisible, but that all our evil *thoughts, words, and actions*, take their rise from our own inherent sinful qualities, and readiness to embrace sin, in which we are *conceived and brought forth*: But joyful the reflection! “*By grace ye are saved.*”

BOOK III.

Chap. I.

Of the *Antediluvian* state of the WORLD
UNTILL THE FLOOD.

ACCORDING to Moses ; “ *In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth.*” However mankind may differ in the principles of primeval motion, or compilation of the numberless millions of minute particles, that compose this wonderful fabric of diversities, and constitute this habitable world ; we do all agree in this one circumstantial point : That there was a time when this world was not ; but whether it was *created*, or *formed* by *one God*, or *two Gods*, or *three Gods*, or by the blind productions of *chance*, by jumbling all these atoms together, and reducing them all into this regular and compact order of symmetry ; I must leave every one to his own thoughts upon the matter ; but if my book should happen to fall into the hands of an advocate for *chance*, as the Creator ; permit me to put two questions to him. Who was the
Creator

Creator of those atoms ? or who put *chance* first in motion ? for my part, I believe, that the *Creator*, was the *One Infinite God* ; and it is to those of the same principle of belief, that I address myself in these lines, with any grounded hopes of being beneficial to others, or happy in myself.

The world being thus created by *God*, he could not view with pleasure the perfect work of his hands (which just before he had pronounced, “ *all very good*”) not probably *one week*, before he saw the seeds of disobedience spring up amongst the fertile productions of variegated nature, and blemished all the beauties of creation.

Must this early degeneracy in nature be ascribed to any *eternal decrees* of the first *great and all wise Architect*, which he had just before pronounced “ *all very good ?*” do this imperfection in creation’s infant beauties convey to our imaginations any thing of a mutual reciprocity between the *Creator*, and the *Created* ? certainly it does not ; it must proceed from some original subverting cause, in direct opposition to the rectitude of creation and providence. If the united harmony of spirits in *Heaven* was interrupted, it is no matter of astonishment that created bodies upon earth should be corrupted ; and we have as sufficient plea to maintain the opinion that the *Almighty decreed*, the revolution in *Heaven*, as to fore-appoint the degeneration upon *earth* ; and where these tenets are supported

as established principles, its advocates might with an equal degree of esteem for, and justice to their *Maker*, style Satan, *an angel of light*, and Adam, "*a man after God's own heart*," for they each of them acted in congruity to their *Maker's will*, they were subservient to his eternal purpose, and done their duty ; and it is impossible that *God* or *Angels* can with equity, and truth call them *rebels*, or *transgressors* ; for they neither rebelled, nor transgressed, but did the *will of God*.

As I said in a former Chap. *sin*, sprung up as an original production in *Heaven*, and also on *Earth* ; and from its increasing malignity to purity, it became the source of increasing, and unbounded evil, and spread its baneful influence, with such rapid progression, that the Almighty himself became *sorrowfully affected*, "*and it grieved him at his heart*," and he "*repented that he had made man*." The *Lord* could not be *grieved*, when he had eternally decreed the causes of his own grievance ; well knowing the *effects* must be dependant on the *cause* and issue *from* it ; neither could he in the proper sense of the phrase be said to *repent* ; because man had all along acted entirely from a dutiful principle of obedience, conformable to *his will*, in *thought*, *word*, and *deed*.

Again, on the principle of *God's Omniscience*, suppose it is granted that he foreknew, and foresaw the impending evil that threatened mankind, by
Adam's

Adam's act of disobedience ; I say, suppose this hypothesis is granted, what fundamental truth can be deduced from it ? will it not in the issue terminate as a mere paralogy ? for must not a *fore-knowledge* of Adam's guilt, without the conveyance of supernatural preventive, be allowed as consistent with, and in conformity to his will ? for to pretend to maintain such heterodox notions with a view of dignifying the *wisdom* of *Omnipotency*, or through fear of reducing from the attributes of the Creator, is just the same as to advance the doctrine of a *fighting God* ; for the same argument will hold good respecting the first transgression in *Heaven*. He fore-knew that *Satan's* mind *would be* possessed with *sin*, with evil desires. He created all things in *Heaven* that could be *seen, heard, or understood*, and without any shadow of doubt pronounced "*all very good ;*" *Satan*, like the other Angels was created "*very good ;*" if he was created with sin ; sin is "*very good ;*" if sin sprung up in *Heaven* afterwards, by *God's will, or fore-knowledge, sin* "*is very good ;*" for whatever proceeds from the *Omniscience* of *God*, prior to the knowledge of man is a *decree* ; although it might not be an *eternal* one, is an *Almighty* one ; which is as equally sure to take place, as it is irresistible, and in vain for man to attempt to escape the force of it ; and, whatever the result of it is ; it is *God's will* ; and consequently can be no sin, or if it is a *sin*, it is a virtuous, and commendable sin ; because it is *God's will* "*done on Earth, as it is in Heaven.*"

If

If the Almighty fore-knew that Adam would eat the fruit, *the tree of knowledge* could not be properly termed a trial of Adam's obedience; for his Creator fore-knew he ordained, that he should eat it, and of course as much impossible for him to avoid eating it, as it was for him to create a new Heaven, and Earth himself; and then the inference to be gathered from it is this: The *Lord* placed Adam in Paradise, with a powerful temptation, and had prior determined that he should fall a victim to the temptation, purely for the sake of cursing his posterity, and involving them all in endless misery, unless they could by unremitting and persevering assiduity in offerings acceptable, disannul the force of the entailed curse, by purchasing pardon for a crime that they could not avoid being accessory unto, through the powerful operations of their *Maker*, and to whom also remission must be made; this bears no more allegory to *God's* goodness and love to mankind, than the glittering rays of the sun's beams do to the darkness of a cavern beneath the face of the earth; nor so much. Hear the words of our primitive reformers—*Calvin*, “I say, that by the ordination, and will of *God*, Adam fell. *God* would have man to fall, man is blinded by the will, and commandment of *God*. We refer the causes of hardening us to *God*. The highest, or remote cause of hardening is the will of *God*.” *Beza*, “*God*” he says “bath predestinated whomsoever he saw meet, not only unto damnation, but also unto the causes of it.” *Zanchius*, says, “that
God

God is the first cause of obduration. Reprobates are held so fast under God Almighty's decree, that they cannot but sin and perish." Martyr saith "God doth incline and force the wills of wicked men into great sins." Zuinglius speaks after the following manner. "God moveth the robber to kill; he killeth, God forcing him thereunto." And lastly, Piscator, "Reprobate persons" saith he, "are absolutely ordained to this two-fold end. To undergo everlasting punishment, and necessarily to sin: and therefore to sin that they may be justly punished." permit me to ask the modern disciples of these ancient fathers, one question. Do not such doctrine make the Almighty, a respecter of persons, a respecter of souls, or a respecter of devil's? consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds." Judges xix. 30. For whom did Christ die? the Elect stood in no need of his death; and the *reprobated* could derive no benefit from it? This appears to me to be one of the many ill judged mysteries that "are past finding out."

We must now return to the original thread of the chapter. Sin began to increase and abound mightily on the earth; the first that we read of as issuing from the parent root, was a *murder*, and this is the only recorded sin we have related in the sacred writings before the flood; but that iniquity did reign, and abundantly flourish we are sufficiently convinced from the voice of the *Almighty*; for it repented him that he had made man: the world

was now supposed to be *one thousand five hundred and thirty-five years old* ; and ripe in sin and wickedness, we must conclude it to be ; for the *righteous*, and *unrighteous*, all experienced the universal destruction : Was this the consequence of an eternal decree, or of a provoked wrath ? Judge ye. Why was there but *eight persons* in the whole, preserved from the general deluge ? Every one is here at liberty to form his own ideas, I can speak but my own opinion : I believe there was no family living as righteous as *Noah's* family, and but few whose lives was exemplary for piety and holiness ; and though it may be the will of *God* that the righteous, with the wicked, should be buried in the dreadful deluge, we must not suppose that every soul had forfeited by practical transgressions their right to an inheritance in *God's* kingdom ; but we may I think with equity and truth conclude, that there was no individual that was so free from iniquity as *Noah*, or as fit for the important charge of repopling the world ; and although the upright that was drowned with the prophane may not according to our imperfect, and finite conceptions of Omnipotent, and Eternal Wisdom, merit such a severe token of *God's* displeasure, we have at the same time as much justice to vindicate *Heaven* in it, as on the other hand we might judge rashly and unrighteously in this place, the 1st Verse of 57th Chap. of *Isaiah* is very applicable, and to which I refer the reader, without inserting the text ; and as the *Almighty*
wisely

wisely appointed souls sufficient for preservation in the Ark for the needful purpose of a future increase, and replenishing the world ; there was no absolute necessity for more to be saved ; as he was in his own inherent *all-sufficient* qualities able to protect them during the flowing of the waters in the Ark ; to preserve them from bodily calamities, and death ; and to insure to them a length of days to increase and multiply again in the world ; all these necessary subserviencies for the accomplishing of so salutary, and important event we find was without the least defect in nature's courses, and the works of Providence all fully verified, and brought to pass in their regular rotations ; subject only to the unavoidable, and necessary vicissitudes, and mutations of Creation's works.

CHAP.

Chap. II.

ON REPEOPLING THE WORLD.

HERE we have an evident demonstration brought within the compass of our senses (unless we are determined to be wilfully blind, and obstinately ignorant) that it was not the will of *God* that the intents, and purposes of Creation should be frustrated ; that the inherent sin in dwelling within mankind should make null, and void, his eternal decree to replace the fallen Angels by spirits immaculate, and divinely pure.

Noah being now gone forth from the Ark the *Lord* blessed him, and enjoined upon him what duties to observe, what was good and lawful for food, and what he was to abstain from ; and bid him *be fruitful and multiply*. Now Noah was under no tempting restraint, nor constrained by any powerful impulse to the commission of evil : we read of no particular covenant, or express obligations, or conditions of agreement entered into between *God* and Noah ; from which we may very reasonably conclude that the *Lord* had experienced a sufficiency of Noah's integrity to remove from his mind any expectations

pectations of disobedience ; and that future generations would become a world of pure and righteous souls ; for there was no other means whereby the new world could be tempted or seduced to sin, but by the first workings of Satan's inherent sin, wherein generations would be *conceived*, and the more dangerous examples of Noah's posterity ; for we do not read that ever the *Devil*, a *Serpent*, or a fallen *Angel* appeared unto them under any disguise, angelical or infernal ; nor under the similitude of any part of creation, irrational or inanimate ; and yet we find that sin soon began to rise again, and spread itself throughout the earth ; and even in Noah's own time, and that in his own family ; for his second son saw him naked, and made sport of him, for which his father cursed him. The next sin we read of is building the tower of *Babel* ; the next is the wickedness of *Sodom and Gomorrah* ; here a whole city was destroyed because *ten* righteous souls could not be found in it : how can any reasonable person bring their sentiments of these denunciations and executed judgments of *God*, and increasing evil of *Sodom* to any solid conclusion ; that all these inconsistent and unexpected transactions should proceed from an unalterable, and eternal decree of *God*, before even the world was made ? for if every thing subject to *thought, hearing, or understanding* was decreed by the Creator of the world, before Creation self became an existence ; both *good and evil* is a mere phantom, for the two principles are co-existent, and indivisible ; because they are the pure source

source of *God's own will*; and thus may we proceed throughout the whole bible, attributing every sin to *God's* decree; but then what must we say to the xx. chap. of Exodus? *up* the opinion of eternal ordination must be revoked, or *God* come under the censure of a very severe task master; much harder than Pharoah; who only required additional *straw to the bricks*; but *God* enjoineth commands to be observed, and have antecedent to the time issued an irrevocable prohibition to the fulfilling them, and threatens a curse everlasting upon the disobedience, or breach of them: How unjust, how unreasonable, and how wicked it is to permit such degrading ideas, and opinions, of a good, tender, and merciful *God*, to possess our souls: I wish it was possible to persuade mankind that *God Almighty* never decreed any evil causes or evil effects to man; but that all the good we enjoy proceeds from his bountiful providence: and all the sin we commit, from our own imbibed corruption and growing depravity; and as I have already justified *God* from being the *author* of sin, I will now endeavour to acquit him from being either *instrumental*, or *privy* to it. He is "*abundant in goodness and truth*," Exod. xxxiv. 6. "*Goodness and truth*," bears no analogy to sin. *There is joy in heaven when a sinner repent upon earth.* The sins of the world before the coming of *Jesus*, and the sins since that time are all similar in their nature of opposition to good, and proceeding from the same cause, which are our own inherent sinful qualities wherein we are conceived; consequently,

consequently, by treating upon sin now in a general sense, I shall be under no necessity of introducing the subject again, when I am speaking more particularly of the miserable consequences of it in a future chapter.

Sin is our birthright, and *heaven* our conditional adopted inheritance, by eschewing the one, we shall secure the other ; but if we maintain the doctrine of *God's* omniscience, of *non-existencies*, that is, to be acquainted with all our *words, thoughts* and *actions* before we have gave them birth, or rise in our own imaginations, it quite confounds the maxims of *right and wrong*, and makes God to be either the *author* or *willer* of sin ; which at once acquits the sinner from all breach of duty : *God's will is done*. Here I must confess I differ in opinion from all that are gone before me ; that *God* know not what will be the imaginations of our hearts ; before the thoughts are conceived in our own minds ; but no sooner are they conceived but his *Omniscience* discovers them, and he can frustrate the accomplishing these intentional motions, or permit them ; this depends entirely upon his *WILL*, and whether it is *good*, or *evil*, it is intended for his *glory*, and our *good* ; if *good*, his holy name will be immediately honoured by it ; if *evil*, it is designed as a correction or judgement ; in either sense by due deliberation it will be sanctified unto us as an inestimable blessing ; and this one observation may with propriety be remarked ; that there never is a sinful thought

thought enter our minds but it is immediately followed, by an inward sensible check, or conviction of its impropriety? (the word *immediately* in this place is a relative term, and signify, before that wicked thought can be properly enforced, or put into action to produce the necessary consequences expected to accrue from it,) and this check of conscience is nothing more, or less, than what we call the *Grace of God*, and if we cherish, and nourish it directly, the temptation vanish, the *Grace of God* is working in us, and that is one evil inclination, or in dwelling temptation overcome; and the same allegation will hold good against all the evil concupiscence, and outward temptation, or allurements, that might at times be attracting, to seduce us to the embracing of evil.

It is a very great consolation to us, that sin is always combated with good, and nothing is wanted to make us conquerors but to embrace the gracious opportunity, and apply the weapons of *Grace*; and this is crucifying "*the flesh, with the affections and lusts,*" *St. Paul's* advice to the *Galatians*. But again, good is not always accompanied with evil; for a righteous soul do very frequently experience the comforts of calm composure, pious consolation, and serious devotion, without even a *thought* of the *world*, the *flesh*, or the *Devil*, taking possession of his soul to interrupt, or disturb his peace of mind, for a considerable time, and oftentimes seems to be wrapt up in such inexpressible extacies of joy, and triumphant

triumphant holiness, as if he was on the very borders of *Heaven*, and in sight of its treasured *Glories*; this happy frame I believe have been at intervals the state of *thousand* and *tens of thousands*, since the first rise of *sin*; and this never would be the case if Satan was endued with, or could arrogate to himself such unlimited power, and dominion over the rational faculties of man, as is, by too many vainly attributed unto him; he never would permit *grace* to be triumphant, if he could prevent it, but we see that it oftentimes is; *or woe be to the world!* but the *Almighty* never suffers *sin* under no disguise, shape, or form, to prevail without administering the cordials of *free grace* (unasked for) to prevent the contagious disorder from spreading its influence; until we have by persevering stubborn obstinacy, and obduracy of heart, exhausted his patience, and refused the repeated proffers of *healing graces*, with slighted disdain; then we are left to our own sinful courses, or at least so estranged to his *gracious* workings with us, as not to comprehend them, and consequently derive no benefit from them.

The Almighty never do while he spares us in this transitory world entirely forsake us, but as the celebrated Dr. Watts says,

“While the lamp holds out to burn;

The vilest sinner may return.”

If he is not too far advanced in the *broadway*, to find his way back to the *“strait, and narrow path”* but as this might be a dangerous state to trust unto; let us
hear

hear what that *pious* and holy child of God the late Rev. J. Westly, say, that powerful advocate for *early repentance, and persevering integrity.*

“Yield to his loves resistless power,
And fight against your GOD no more.
This is the time ; no more delay !
This is the acceptable day.
Sinners turn, why will ye die ?
God the spirit asks you why ?
Will you let him die in vain ?
Crucify your Lord again ?
His offer'd benefits embrace.
And freely now be sav'd by Grace !”

By *grace* we are saved, and what *grace* is I have already mentioned, and in addition unto it our Saviour, and St. Paul both recommend *faith* as a very necessary concomitant to forward our growth in *grace*, and a growth in *grace* is good works for “*What doth it profit my brethren, though a man saith he hath faith, and have not works ? Can faith save him.*” St. James ii. 14.

Now from what has been said, it is evident that the generations springing from Noah's family until the coming of *Jesus*, had but the same inherent sins to tempt them, the same *graces* for deliverance and to improve or grow in, the same eternal promises to believe in, the same *glories* to secure, and same misery to escape (by “*working out their salvation with fear, and trembling*”) under the dispensation

penfation of the *law*, as we have under the manifestation of the *gospel* ; with this difference, by a variation on the subjects we believe in, and work upon ; theirs by faith in the revealed promises by *Moses*, and the *Prophets* ; ours by faith in *Jesus*, and his *Apostles* ; and instead of our presenting as offerings for sin ; *Lambs*, *Goats*, or *Doves* ; no more is required under the new covenant, than the offerings of penitence, and contrition, through a *faith* in the *mission* of *Jesus*, and to “*amend our lives according unto his holy word* ;” in this respect we are more inexcusable than the *Jews*, for they have outward sacrifices, as well as *inward faith* to present for offerings of atonement ; but for the believers in *Jesus*, he offered up his body as a bloody sacrifice “*once for all* ;” “*that whomsoever believed in him, should not perish but have everlasting life.*” This belief is our *faith* ; but without works this belief is dead.

“*Belief, disjunctive of good works,*” as the Apostle says, “*cannot save us.*”

From Noah’s coming out of the Ark, until *Jesus*’s coming into the world ; we read of the prevalency of sin throughout every generation, and exemplified in such impious, and presumptuous instances, that the greatest astonishment to a serious, and considering soul, is, which excelled in manifestation ; their transgressions, or *Heavens* clemency ; for if we refer to *holy writ* we find that repeated trespasses, and repeated pardons, constitute the greatest part of

of the prophetical writings : We need not refer to any other particular manifestations of *God's* clemency, tenderness, and love, for the offspring of Noah, or Adam, than what was displayed towards the children of Israel, the descendants of Abraham, to whom he promised an increase of his seed, *like to the stars in the Heaven for multitude* ; and the event fully demonstrates his promise being accomplished ; the children of Israel was this promised seed, but they, like other nations, and all mankind in common, was *conceived in sin*, and *brought forth in iniquity* ; and subject to the same unruly passions, and ungoverned appetites for folly, and evil ; but the *Lord* choose them as a peculiar people (*not zealous of good works*) for to make known his will, not unto them only, but to all other nations ; that he was *ready, able, and willing*, to deliver all those that put their trust in him ; and to be a *God*, unto all those that acknowledged him as *God*, for how many nations we read of that served *Idols*, or self-made *Gods* ; but notwithstanding, the Israelites frequent provocations by murmuring, and sometimes joining themselves to the idolatry of other nations, yet it not being their prevailing principles, they still retained a distinguished partiality, and the favoured of the *Lord*.

We now mention a few of *God's* gracious instances of love towards them, such as, their deliverance from Egyptian bondage ; their preservation when crossing the red sea ; the Almighty's care, and tenderness

dernefs of them during their *forty years* travels in the wildernefs ; his enabling them to overcome all difficulties, and to take poffeffion of the land of Canaan ; his bringing their enemies under fubjection, by delivering kings and countries into their hands.

On the other hand, the dignity and power of *God*, was eminently difplayed by his executed judgments upon them for their fins ; as for instance, upon *Achan* for fecreting the fpoils of Jericho ; and for the *molten calf* which *Aaron* made (the Levite his brother) while *Mofes* was in the mount with the *Lord*, which the *Israelites* worfhipped ; at another time while they were in the wildernefs they murmured at the *Lord*, and againft *Mofes*, and the *Lord* fent a fire, and confumed all thofe that were the principal ringleaders of the difcontent ; thefe judgments happened to the firft generation of the *Israelites* that was delivered from captivity and bondage, and croffed the red fea with *Mofes* : Now cometh the judgments of *God* upon the fecond generation, after *Mofes* and *Jofhua* was both dead. They began to worfhip the *Gods* of the heathens : *Baal* and *Ashtaroth*, and for which they was overcome by their enemies, and was in captivity to the king of Mefopotamia *eight years* ; and after enjoying peace on all fides for forty years afterwards, they again began to fall into evil, and provoked the *Lord*, by which they were fmote, and conquered by the king of Moab, and was under fubjection eighteen years ; and thus we find throughout all the hiftorical

cal part of the bible, a scene of vicissitudes, and unexpected circumstances occurring of *trespasses*, and *penitence*; and *judgments*, and *mercy*; that it appears almost an impossibility to reconcile our comprehensions to such a mass of opposites, and contraries, by imagining that all these wonderful and surprising events, should be *foreknown*, much less *ordained*, or *decreed*, by the *Creator of the universe*, before the universe was even created: it is making him the author of a confused heap of *absurdities*, *contradictions*, *perplexities*, *cruelties*, *massacres*, *vice*, *folly*, *impiety*, and breach of all his own *ten commandments*; *Jesus's* crucifixion no more than a mockery, and the sacrifice of his blood no more than a deception; and the ignominious epithet cast upon him by the Jews of being no better than an *impostor*, is no more than his due; for how in the name of rational reasoning can he be *able to deliver unto the utmost all those that come unto him*? St. Paul; or in his own words; "*For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*;" who he could mean by *righteous*, or *sinners*, it is impossible to judge, on these grounds: for the righteous are beyond the reach of *loss*, or *suffering*; and sinners are beneath the reach of *hope*, or *promise*: and if we look upon the Prophets as speaking by inspiration of the *Almighty*, what can we think of *Isaiah* lv. 7. and *Ezekiel* xviii. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, and 32; whatever others may think, or say, or whatever may be their power of rhetoric, and strength of argument, or animadversion;

sion ; I never will be persuaded to believe a doctrine founded upon the principles of such injustice in my *Maker*, as to think it possible, with the *Lord God*, that neither respect persons, nor take gifts, (according to the words of good king *Jehoshaphat*) should be a *partial destroyer* of souls ; and after his proffered mercy and graces to the wicked : *Jeremiah xxxi. 34* “ *I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sins no more ;*” the forgiveness of their iniquities could avail nothing towards the mitigation or alleviation of their everlasting misery, while the *first* decreed irrevocable curse do still remain in force ; for if *one* of *God's* decrees is revocable, we have the same reason to conclude all might be, and thereby in the end reduce the *One Great Almighty, Omniscient, and Unchangeable Creator*, to the *humble, degenerate, imperfect* state of poor *fallible* creatures ; but as this is improbable, so it is also equally impossible, that the *Great God* should promise more than he could, or more than he intended to perform : *to forgive the iniquities of the penitent, and save their souls alive.*

Now throughout this whole chapter there seems to be a current of inconceivable mysteries ; whether we take all the scriptural references in the sense of *God's omniscience*, or *fore-ordination*, respecting the *Israelites*, and other nations, in their *wars, blasphemies, idolatrous worship*, or crimes of any nature, or degree whatever ; it all amounts to this conclusive point in the end ; the *Almighty* did, or did

did not know it would happen ; if he did, the whole bible is a *mystery* “ *past finding out* ;” if he did not, it is all brought within our comprehensions ; it proceeded from the *inherent* sinfulness of the people, and the *Lord* did deal with them according to the wisdom of his own will : sometimes his power was displayed as soon as the imagination was conceived in the mind ; and at other times it was permitted to arrive to full maturity ; this we must grant to be *God's* prerogative ; for an *evil desire* is as sinful as an *evil action*, if the commission is prevented only through want of the means to put in force ; and contrariwise is *good* ; the *will* is equally acceptable as the *deed* ; but if we attribute the first *origin* and *rise* of *good* or *evil* in our minds to *God's* Omniscience or *decree* ; we are acquitted of all *inherent* qualities that tendeth to sin, and it is immediately transmitted from us to *God* ; for as I before said, there is no existing difference between *God's* Omniscience and his *decrees* ; for by his being acquainted with all our *thoughts*, *words*, and *actions*, that is no Omniscience, because we *first conceived*, and he only knew our *conceptions* before we put them in force : We are oftentimes told in the sacred writings that the *Lord* knoweth *what is in the heart*, or in the *mind* for to do ; but no where that he knoweth what *will* proceed from the heart ; he know we are *conceived* in *sin*, and brought forth in *iniquity* ; and know that he endueth us with rational understanding, and reason to subdue it, and keep it under subjection to holiness ; and these are the

the “*deeds done in the body, whether they are good, or whether they are evil,*” and for which we shall receive our reward hereafter. We are all of us in the same situation of the children of *Israel* in *Deut.* xxx. and 15, and left entirely to the freedom of our own wills, free from all powerful enforcements and allurements to sin, but what proceeds from our own natural indwelling depravity : here our imaginations are not strained to understand the revealed word ; we can bring our ideas to a final conclusion, and impute nothing to *Omnipotency* exceeding our own conceptions, and acquit *God* from all accusations of being either *principal* or *agent* in our iniquities ; and the sole distributor of *good* only ; while we can see that all *evil* springs from the first engrafted root of our forefather, and either is cherished or overcome, as we are disposed to improve, or reject the *grace* of *God*, that always accompany it.

Chap. III.

ON THE COMING OF *JESUS*,

WHETHER we do or do not have recourse to the prophecies to support our confidence in the veracity of *Jesus's divinity* ; it is against every effort of impiety and *Arianism*, vindicated by deliberate reasoning, and truth, and will, on mature and serious reflection, appear incontestibly manifest.

The Virgin his mother conceived with him, when she was only espoused to, and had not known *Joseph* her husband ; and this conception proceeded from the power of God's *holy Spirit* : Will you grant this as easy for *God* to accomplish, as for to create Adam out of the earth ? without doubt you will ; then the principal bulwark of your incredulity is undermined at the foundation ; for the very source that constitutes his *divinity* you have granted (for all *God's* works are *divine*) unless there are any so strangely debauched in principle, as to impute *unchastity* to the *holy Virgin*, and unless they avouch this cursed hypothesis, they have no foundation whereon to erect their groundless suppositions of his being barely the *Son* of man, exclusive
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of the heavenly privileges due unto him as the Son of God ; and this being but a very sandy basis whereon to build their faith, I very much doubt, when the *winds* blow and *tempests* beat on a *death bed*, if the whole fabric will not fall, “ *and great will be the fall of it !*” the *wonderful* conception must be denied, or his immaculate *divinity*, cannot be precluded ; it was certainly impossible for the Virgin to conceive without the aid of a natural or supernatural power, and that the former was not the case, we have demonstrative proof from the voice of God, that it was by the power of the *Holy Ghost* ; that is, the *Holy Spirit* of God ; and this when she was only espoused, and had not known her intended husband, nor any other man : for it is said in *Isaiah* vii. and 14. “ *Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bare a Son :*” and *Matt.* i. and 23. “ *Behold a Virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son :*” We are now convinced she was a *Virgin*, even after her conception ; which ought to put the matter in question out of all dispute.

It is very obvious to our rational discernment, that all the invisible works of God, proceeds from the operating effects of his spirit and are in themselves, as far as relates to our descrying their peculiar properties in action, *supernatural* or wonderful ; as being beyond the limits of our finite conceptions, comprehensions or ideas, respecting the original source of their organization ; and consequently, do retain a spiritual principle, and cannot by created motion

motion or matter, be divested of its primeval composition.

All the revolving productions of nature since the creation of the world, have in regular rotation proceeded from natural generation; every different specie of animal, or inanimate life after its kind; and whatever causes or effects have come to pass posterior to that time, surpassing the conceptions, or ideas of mankind, are the *Infinite* productions of *God Almighty's Spirit*; otherwise the works of *God*, as an *omnipotent* spirit; and during its retaining that state for which it was in the first place intended by *God*, it is still maintained in its original purity, and perfection; and while it is in this pure existing state, it still retains a proportional medium of that spiritual influence that first put it in force: consequently it is an indisputable truth, founded upon the solid basis of *Heavenly* truth; that *Jesus* must inherit, and possess the intrinsic virtues of the *spirit of God*, while he was under the influencing motives and power of that spirit; and as an additional demonstrative proof of *Jesus's* spirituality; the *Lord God* entitles him with the appellation of *his Son*, and into whose hands he would commit all things in *Heaven*, and on *Earth*, and make him his coequal in the mansions of glory, for ever and ever: to be one with *God his Father*, in the regions of glory; and as *God* over the *Angels* in *Heaven*, and over the "*Spirits of just men made perfect*," and over the souls of the damned in the gulph of to-
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phet, "*where their worms dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*"

We now enter upon the subject of *Jesus's* mission, and how far that mission was fulfilled.

The reader will remember I have before acknowledged *Jesus* to be the *Son of God* from eternity, and also gave a definition of the two terms *Infinity* and *Eternity*, and from that space to the time of his being revealed in the flesh, he was in *heaven*; but what room we have to reason on the doctrine of his being predetermined by *God* to become a crucified sacrifice on the cross from the creation of the world I know not; for had not Adam sinned, or had not his progeny "*grieved him at his heart*" with their iniquities (for their hearts "*was only evil continually*") or the offspring of righteous *Noah* throughout so many succeeding generations for more than two thousand years provoked him to wrath, and incurred his renewed displeasure by rejecting and despising his gracious and compassionate invitations; I say, had not these aggravated instances of repeated rebellion, and disobedience have taken place; but *holiness, righteousness* and *godliness*, prevailed in the land, in either of these *three* instances; the will of *God* would been done, "*on earth as it is in heaven,*" and consequently no need of a *Mediator, Intercessor* or *Saviour* to be offered up as a "*sacrifice once for all,*" consequently, it is very apparent to any impartial considerer that the mission of *Jesus* was to estab-

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lish exemplary precepts and rules of obedience, whereby mankind might come more particularly acquainted with their *Maker's* will.

The *Almighty* saw that the sins of men did so still abound, and rapidly increase, that neither clemency, mercy, threats, or judgments were effectual to alienate them from their hardness of heart ; and because the progressive course of sin should not totally involve every generation both past, and future, in the deplorable state of endless woe, and torments in *hell* ; he wisely, and mercifully, had recourse to the method of a general and universal (conditional) redemption, by sending down from *heaven* his *Son*, to take upon him our form and nature, (sin excepted) subject to every passion, tribulation, calamity, affliction, and trial as we are ; he was not exempted from the least bodily infirmity, or sensation of feeling either from pains of body or anguish of mind ; endued with the same degree of reflection, and contemplation, and a capacity for improving, or ill-using his *heavenly* talents ; for during his abode upon earth he was divested of all his immaculate inherent properties, relative to his subjection to all the infirmities incident to the frail nature he voluntarily took upon himself ; although there are authors, and those of liberal sentiments, and profound erudition in philosophical knowledge, and obtruse sciences, that contends that the *moral* or *religious* precepts of *Jesus*, and his obedience to the statutes and commandments of *God*, is not a rule

rule of *justice, equity* and *truth*, for future generations ; because his *angelic*, or *spiritual* excellencies enabled him to accomplish all his appointed purposes, without those trials that poor frail, and sinful mortals, are subject unto ; I grant he still retained those pure and divine faculties as enabled him to defy, and resist all those inherent evil qualities that we must suppose he was tainted with, by being brought forth in iniquity ; for not being conceived in sin ; the evil properties adhering to his *mother* could in no sense affect him ; for he was only *brought forth* in a world of *iniquity*, and not *conceived* by it ; and consequently, he cannot with propriety be said to be an example for mankind to follow, because they possess not his *divine* and *heavenly* attributes : to these arguments I oppose, that his perfection is not to be put in the same scales of reasoning with our imperfection : his embassy properly speaking, was more *admonitory* than *exemplary*, because as examples, his perfection put it out of our power to follow him, and we still should have had a *cloak* for our *sin* ; but as admonitory counsel, or exhortation we have no other allegation to adduce but indolence, and supine inactivity, because we are endued with the needful rational understanding, and reasonable faculties to enable us to withstand all inordinances, and unruly desires, proceeding from the depravity of our own hearts, and through the *grace* of *God* (which is never withheld from the fervent petitioner) to put a restraint upon all rising commotions and unholy inclinations of our souls ;
and

and to render the obligations under the new covenant more easy to be observed and fulfilled than those under the old ; the *Almighty* has been graciously pleased to dispense with all his former injunctions, and commands to generations that knew not the name of *Jesus*, by abolishing all former necessary sacrifices, and offerings for atonements, qualifications, and purgations, and require no further oblations from the followers of *Jesus*, than penitance, contrition, and humiliation, with a faith in the *Messiah*, as ready, able and willing to save all those
“ *that come unto God by him.*”

All the *preaching miracles*, and *sufferings* of *Jesus* was no more than what might be performed by another person, with the same supernatural assistance ; and without presumption, or blasphemy we may venture to attest that in former ages, or even in the *present generation*, there have been many recent instances of men undergoing bodily calamities, persecuting trials, and scourging severities, equal, if not to exceed those that our Saviour experienced, (his crucifixion excepted) and this being the principal cause of his commission and descension from *heaven*, it is more than is necessary, or required by *God* from us on the one hand ; and what would not be attended with any *glory* to *God*, or salutary purpose, or beneficial advantage to us on the other ; and for the miracles that *Jesus* performed it was no more than what was absolutely expedient for the recommending that new religion
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that he was sent to propagate; and in the end to seal with his blood : the *generation* in which he began to preach the doctrine of a *new birth* and regeneration, by declaring his mission, and enforcing *humiliation*, and the three cardinal virtues, *faith*, *hope*, and *charity*, was in comparison of their vices, and impiety, a “*generation of vipers*,” and so Jesus called them, and said unto them ; “*who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come.*”

In such an untoward, and perverse generation, it would been impossible to have established his doctrine, so opposite in all its extremes, to the tempers and dispositions of such a heterogeneous mass of people, as at that time dwelt in, and round about *Jerusalem*, *Judea* *Capernaum*, *Galilee*, and all other parts where he travelled, and preached and more than all to persuade them to a belief of his being the promised *Messiah* ; *the Son of God* ; and at a time when the expectations of the people was arrived to the highest degree of enthusiasm, in hopes of an exalted, and dignified earthly *King*, that would make his entrance amongst them in the most superlative state of splendor, and magnificence, and raise the ambitious, and already lofty-minded, to some eminent offices, and places of lucrative interest ; and being disappointed in these their self-exalted views, it excited their indignation, and induced them to stir up the more indigent, and dependant poor, and thus produced clamours, and revilings against the *Lord of life* ; and this we find was exemplified throughout

throughout his whole life, and how difficult it was for him to prevail upon the superstitious notions of those few that did adhere unto him is very evident from the recited instances in the sacred writings ; as for instance Mark x. and 22. Accts v. and 2. although this last was not disobeying the exprefs *voice* of *Jesus* ; it was his exprefs *command*, for it was after the apostles were inspired with the *divine* breathings of the *Holy Ghost*, and enabled, and authorised, to work miracles for the propagation of the *christian religion*, by natural, and supernatural means, it was also necessary that the apostles should be endued with the gifts of miraculous healing, and other wonderful powers ; for the religion and doctrine of *Jesus*, being yet in its infantile state, and its profelytes but very few in comparison to its enemies, and those of the lowest, and most unlearned class of people ; and without some such responsible vouchers, as ocular demonstration to evince, and vindicate their pretensions, and faith in this despised, and persecuted *leader* of theirs, it is very probable their converts would been very few, and their own lives in inevitable danger and after these first few adventurous followers of *Jesus*, had been by untimely death extirpated, or by the course of nature resigned their “*spirits unto God who gave them* ;” there would be small encouragement for others who never had *seen*, or *known* any thing of this *Jesus* whose fame was so rumoured abroad, to undertake to defend his cause against the violence of oppression supported by *power*, *numbers*, and *threats*, and consequently

consequently this *blessed*, this *glorious*, this *soul saving* cause for which the *Son of God* came down from *heaven*, must have naturally dwindled into forgetfulness and oblivion, and thought on no more ; how then should we of the present generation been now groping in worse than Egyptian darkness, and wallowing in the mire of *original* impunity, and all lascivious uncleanness, until we had brought the judgments of *God* down upon us, more weightily than on *Sodom*, or *Gomorrah* : O, how ought we to lift up our *hearts*, and *hands* to *heaven* with the tributes of devout thanksgiving and praise, and learn thereby to know the value of the *christian religion*, and lock it up in our souls as a treasure of inestimable worth ! as a “ *pearl of great price*,” and instead of bickerings, animosities, and strife amongst us by unhappy, and *sinful* divisions, we could all unite in harmony, love, and concord, in building up the *church of Christ* and join hands, and hearts, to bring all our principles of doctrinal faith to the same touchstone of truth, divested of all *bigotry*, *blind-zeal*, and *superstition*, and as we profess to be believers in *Jesus*, so to become followers of *Christ*, like unto his holy apostles, to be all of the same mind ; to salute one another with brotherly love, as sheep of the same fold, and feeding on the same pasture, and to offer up our sacrifices of *prayer*, *praise*, and *thanksgiving* at the same hallowed altar of devotion ; this would be the means of promoting the cause of our dear Redeemer and Mediator, and stimulate us to be praying for one another, and saving all our
“ *souls*”

“*souls alive;*” and instead of *Anathemas* and *Maranathas* exclaiming against each other, every separate converticle, and house of public worship would all join in concordance of hallelujahs to him that shall “*sit upon the throne of his glory,*” Matt. xxv. and 31. “*and good will towards men,*” Luke ii. and 14. O, if this feeble pen should be in a little measure instrumental towards accomplishing that salutary, and *needful* purpose, how would it elevate the humble author to lift up his soul to the Father and Parent of all good, with devout acclamations of joyful gladness, and sincere praise; and all the *glory* redound to the original mover, and actor *Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Jesus having fulfilled his appointed embassy, and the time drawing near that his mission was to be fully accomplished, he forewarned his apostles and disciples of his approaching change; and from the private communications he had with his Father in *heaven*, pointed out the very man that should betray him; for *Judas* had determined in his mind to embrace an opportunity to become a traitor to his *Master* for filthy lucre sake; the imaginations of his heart was known unto *God* and from *God* unto *Jesus*: I hardly think that *Jesus* while in the flesh was endued with *prescience*, but all his knowledge of the hearts, and imaginations of men, was by his Father’s inspiration; neither did he know when, where, or in *what manner* he should die, until the time drawing near it was revealed unto him
by

by God ; and, notwithstanding he was sensible of what would soon befall him, he bore all the insults, mockeries, revilings and scourging of his enemies with stedfast fortitude and undaunted courage, and “ *for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame.*” Heb. xii. 2. Here we read of his expecting joy, which was a stimulative to encourage him under the approaching trials, from which we may reasonably conclude that he had no more of the attributes of a *divine* nature peculiar unto him while upon earth than another man ; for he was only subservient to his Father’s workings ; “ *for he came down from heaven not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him.*” John vii. and 38 ; and further demonstration of his being under the dominion of natural or human sensations, we have sufficient evidence when he was upon the cross, and which almost amounts to a testimony of doubt or fear of his Father’s love, Matt. xxvii. and 46. After hanging on the cross nine hours “ *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?*” consequently, while Jesus was in the flesh, he was but as man, and no more than man, and done no more nor suffered more than any other man could, under the influence of the same *Almighty wisdom, guidance and support* ; for he made himself equal unto us, and “ *not ashamed to call*” us *brethren,*” Heb. ii. and 11. and this being manifestly the case, we have now “ *no cloak for*” our “ *sin*” John xv. and 22. and as a farther proof that he was no more than man, while in the flesh, we have only to refer to Matt. xii. and 32. to his own words ;
“ *Whosoever*

“Whosoever speaketh a word against the son of man, it shall be forgiven him :” and again, Luke xxii. and 48. *“But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the son of man with a kiss ?”* and in this act of Judas he committed no greater sin than if he had betrayed any other man under the same stigma of disgrace, as an *impostor*, for it was ordained, or appointed by God that some man, or men, should put him to death ; but I do not imagine the nature of the death was prefixed by the *Almighty*, nor even known by *Jesus* when he was before the tribunal of *Pontius Pilate* ; but he knew he was to die, and for what purpose ; and that death would have no longer dominion over him, than to convince his *followers in particular* as well as his persecutors, that he should arise from the dead, and as he says in John xx. and 17. *“Ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God and your God :”* thus the mission of *Jesus* was accomplished, and all the prophecies foretold of him fulfilled, and as he was is again the divine *Son of God* in glory ; but every severity, persecution, mockery, and even death itself while he was upon earth, comes under the proffered invitation of Isa. lv. and 7. *“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts ; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon :”* from hence-forth judge not so uncharitably of the present race of the children of *Israel* ; for their forefathers acted more from principles of conscience to glorify their *Creator*, by crucifying (as they

they thought) an *imposter*, 'than this generation do by professing a belief in him, and daily recrucifying him by backsliding from him ; they faithfully serve their *God* that created them, and we as shamefully mock our Saviour that redeemed us.

CHAP.

Chap. IV.

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST, CONNECTED
WITH HIS GODHEAD.

WE now come to treat of the Saviour of men in a more exalted and dignified appellation. The title of JESUS is now no longer applicable to him, he has with unremitting diligence and faithfulness discharged his appointed embessay in the character and capacity of *man* ; and JESUS was the name annexed to his *human* nature, as given him by an *Angel* as the appointed Minister of *God his Father*, “ *And behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS,*” and this was his name in the flesh, and CHRIST his name in the Spirit ; we no where read of his being called JESUS the *Son of God*, throughout the four Evangelists, but JESUS the *Son of man*, and Saviour of men ; and *Christ* the *Son of God*, who “ *is all in all.*”

Every needful work for the purpose of redemption, and mediation between *God* and *man*, was accurately completed ; *he did those things that he ought to have done, and did not do those things which he*
ought

ought to have left undone ; he is now no longer subservient to any of those changeable circumstances and occurring vicissitudes, to which he was subject while in a state of humiliation in the flesh ; redemption is completed ; “ it is finished,” he said ; “ and he bowed his head and gave up the Ghost :” the sacrifice amounted towards heaven, “ for a sweet smelling savour.” and the spirit returned unto the Lord that gave it.

If we may be allowed the language to bring the allusion more suitable to the comprehension of our finite and contracted ideas ; he is promoted from *earth* to *heaven* ; or in plainer terms, returned from whence he came, and reassumed his former *glory* ; and sitteth now at the right hand of God, exalted infinitely above our conceptions, imaginations or ideas, until the *great judgment day*, when he will sit in the *glory* of his *majesty* to judge both the *quick* and the *dead*, whose kingdom will have no end : he is now glorified above all Saints, having all power given unto him in heaven and on earth. “ *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and on earth,*” Matt. xxviii. and 18.

This seems to be a proper place to enter into the subject of *God's decrees* ; a doctrine which has from the earliest days of (what is very improperly called) the reformation, been productive of more *animosity*, *discord* and *strife* than all other discordant opinions
put

put together. It must be granted that the *Almighty* has decreed many vicissitudes and circumstances according to his own wisdom appertaining to the regulation, and well ordering this lower world ; but that is no standard of order for us to judge by, that he hath ordained or decreed every minute transaction, or moving particle of matter that take place ; it would be reducing the entire works of *creation, living, as well as dead*, to a state of inanimation, put in motion only by the impulse of *heavenly* mechanism, and like total inanimate existences, created only for instruments to perform their *Maker's* will, and *speak, act, and think* by implicit influence, according to the powers of *Almighty* force ; and thus journeying through this pilgrimage of life, dreading awarded punishment in the next world, and entirely innocent of all guilt in this.

When a boy is first sent to school, he is taught this lesson “ *fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man* ” Ecclesiastes xii. and 13. Now when he arrive to years of more mature consideration, and capable of knowing, and keeping these commandments, he is taught to believe from the precepts of his preacher, or pastor, and examples of his parents, that it is out of his power to obey this injunction, and in vain for him to try ; for the *God* that delivered those commandments has put an inevitable restraint upon all the whole race of mankind, *except a few*, that they shall not keep them, because he will justify himself

in

in condemning them, and glorify himself in their everlasting damnation! thus the school boy is instructed in lessons of love to *God*, and in his manhood, is taught to believe that love impossible, and *God* will *damn* him for that impossibility! And all the consolation he can draw from these premises, is this; it is unknown who is *one* of the *few*; who is the *sinner*? who is the *righteous*? but then what means those words of *Jesus*? “*I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*” Now if this scripture proof is granted to be the words of *Jesus*; the *Ax* is at once laid to the root of *predestination*, and *God* is acquitted from all severity, and injustice; if the proof is not granted as from divine inspiration, we have the same arguments to disbelieve all those parts that denounce decreed damnation, so that *God* is still acquitted of cruelty, and unjust punishment; but if every part of the sacred writings is allowed as divinely dictated, we must blame either the *interpreters, printers or commentators*; and I hope I shall make it appear, that the error rest *entirely* on the side of the *commentators*; and to acquit *God* from all imputations of *cruelty*; *Jesus* from all accusations of *imposition*; and his *apostles* from all *deception* and *hypocrisy*!

A decree, is a predetermination; whether of *God*, or man, it makes no difference in the essential properties of the will: all the difference is this; whatever *God* decree always do come to pass, because he is infallible; “*with whom is no variableness, neither shadow*

shadow of turning" St. James i. and 17. but with men there are inconstancies, and unfixed determinations, that frequently disannuls the most vehement protestations.

The decrees of *God* are three fold; they relate to *infinity eternity*, and *worldly*.

1st. They are *Infinite*. He decreed that he would create a *Son*, and *Angels*, to occupy with him the space of *Glory*; this is the only decree that I attribute to the *Great Jehovah* at the first commencement of *glory*, this his *first* decree was accomplished, and brought to pass.

Whatever sentiments others might entertain of *God's Infinite* decrees, I cannot bring my conceptions to any additional ones, while the space of glory was in its present unoccupied state (exclusive of the divine, and glorious presence and perfections of the *one* self-existing immaculate mysterious *God*) although it is very probable he might decree some future circumstances, for the seat of glory; but as we have no revealed record left to posterity by any *one* of the inspired writers to vindicate a belief that he did; why should we presume to ascribe unto him not only *causes*, but *effects* proceeding solely from our own prejudice, superstition, ignorance, and I think I might say *blasphemy*; for what can be a greater indignity offered unto *God*, than not only to believe as an individual, but to proclaim with
the

the voice of a *minister of God's holy word*, that he decreed before he created this world, an *alloted* precise, particular number of its inhabitants designedly for, and their dooms unchangeably sealed for the pains, anguish, misery, torments and burning in the flames of hell for ever, and ever ; because he could not glorify himself without the *weeping, wailing* and *gnashing* of teeth in hell, being united with the concord, praises, and hallelujahs of Heaven ; if the discordancy of such a motley band of choristers is not visible to every real christian, and religious soul ; farewell to *Christ* and his cause ! all those that are not capable of discerning between an Infinite, and an Eternal decree, makes *God* a being that delights in the damnation of angels, although he “ *have no pleasure in the death* ” of the wicked ; as he says himself ; or Ezekiel was a false prophet, and the truth was not in him.

We read of the *fallen* angels, then of course there must be Angels that fell ; or St. Peter, and St. Jude was both of them like the prophet Ezekiel false preachers, and kept their hearers in darkness : but there *was* angels fell, and an *everlasting* fire prepared for them, the *son of God* says ; but there are those that make him a liar also, and others, that make his father a greater liar than him ; for the *son* says “ *my Father is greater than I,* ” but they say he is not, for they are equal ; the *father* says “ *this is my beloved son,* ” but they say, he was not, it was only a fictitious name the father took upon himself :
and

and thus between one unbeliever, and another, the christian religion is become little more than a mockery of *God*, and, a name of reproach for those that believe its sacred truth, and have a desire to save their souls “*by crying out for mercy, turning aside from all wickedness, and working out their salvation with fear and trembling,*” which we must all do, or *St. Paul* also is a liar : how after all those vouchers of the truth of the sacred scriptures, shall I be persuaded to discredit it, or any part of it through the fear of *one*, the influence of *another*, or expectations from *another* ? *God forbid !*

From what have been advanced, we grant there was angels that fell and if they fell by a *decree*, it was an *Infinite decree* ; the impulse of which they could not withstand ; and here we must place the rise of sin, and who was the *first* sinner : but if it was not a *decree*, it was a voluntary rebellion of their own spiritual ambition and lust for equality with their *Maker*, and *this* was the *first* rise of sin. I must now leave every one to their own private judgement ; whether *God*, or an *angel* was the first sinner.

2d *Eternal*, After the revolution he *decreed* to create another world ; this was an *eternal*, but not an *infinite* decree ; we can bring our imaginations to some conclusive point as a cause *when*, and *why*, this decree was made ; which makes it *eternal* as to our comprehending its nature, because it preceded our existence ; within our comprehension as to its cause,
because

because we have the revealed world for a demonstration : I have before gave a definition of the *two* phrases infinity, and eternity, ascribing a precedency to the former, and gave my own humble opinion of the number, (two) and nature of its *decrees*, and a candid impartial reader will give me credit for the deference that I make to Omnipotency, that I presume no arrogancy of confirmation, or propagation of a novel dogma of faith for an implicit rule or establishment of principle ; I only say, I can conceive no more ; if my conceptions are more contracted than others, there are passages of elucidation in sacred record, that have either escaped my notice, or exceeded my comprehension in either case ; I should be happy with a communication of that sacred truth.

Now for *eternal* decrees, I conclude they are most applicable to the state, degrees and circumstances of the angels ; that they should for ever reside in the presence of their Creator, and partake of all the bliss peculiar to their dignified, or glorious natures ; if they still retained that purity and perfection which was their inherent properties, and glorified their *Maker* with contented, and cheerful praises : from hence an inference may be drawn, that the permanency and joy of angels, was by an eternal decree *conditional* ; and posterior events evince the truth of the assertion ; for the condition was broke, and universal harmony ceased, and discord, and tumult, was the woeful consequences : now there
would

would been neither discord, tumult, nor a cessation of harmony by this angelic rebellion, if there had not been a conditional allegiance and subjection, enjoined by the *Almighty one* ! now suppose we maintain that both restrictions and obedience, were prescribed, similar to those to Adam in paradise (although in their natures and degrees, exceeding our finite comprehensions) would there be any thing heteroclitical from what scriptural tradition conveys to our conceptions ? I think not. Where there is no law, there can be no rebellion ; and nothing that ever was, or can be done in heaven or upon earth, would be criminal, if neither *God*, or man, could be offended by it : but we know that the *Lord* was offended at the revolution, then his law was broke ; and if it had not been fully and explicitly, delivered to the Angels, it would been only an error in judgment, and not an error in design ; but the law was fully declared unto them, for “ *there was war in Heaven*” *God* “ *and his Angels fought against the*” *Devil*, “ *and the*” *Devil* “ *fought, and his Angels.*” *Rev. xii. 7.* or all the visionary relations of *St. John* the divine is a fiction, and he come under the same stigma of infamy as all those vouchers of the holy writings before mentioned ; that is, a *liar*.

The next thing that comes under consideration, is, whether the fallen Angels were endued with capacities to enable them to keep this law of *God* ; or whether he had decreed before issuing of it, that they

they *should* not pay due obedience unto it : If the former was the case, they presumptuously, impiously, and vainly declared war against *God* ; “ *and prevailed not* ” Rev. xii. 8. but if the latter, they only acted in the defensive ; for the *Lord* waged war against them by forcing them to an open rupture ; by issuing an edict of obedience, and withholding the means, of compliance ; and not only withholding the means, but compelling them by an irresistible impulse to bid him defiance : the advocates for infinite, or eternal predestination, have no prevaricating sophistical logic to advance here ; no scholastic and book-taught arguments will avail in this case ; no medium between the *two* extremes is admissible here : the plain question is ; was the fall by *Infinite* compulsion, or voluntary rebellion ? (speak the truth, for the *Lord* searcheth the heart, and try the reins ; or *Jeremiah* was another false preacher). Yea, or Nay. If you say the former, I tell you, you make *God* a tyrant ; but the truth is not in *you* : If you say the latter, I readily acquiesce in opinion with you ; but then how will you defend your positive affirmations of his decrees towards men, by absolute *election*, and *reprobation* ? Do you think he created souls on purpose for damnation, because there are not fallen angels enough to fill up the fiery gulph of hell ? for what other purpose could he create them, for this purpose according to your own tenets he did create them ; then either you, or him must be false teachers, and false preachers ; he preached by his prophets, and you preach

he says he is "*no respecter of persons,*" nor desireth "*the death of the wicked ;*" you maintain he is a respecter of persons, and have created them *purposely* and for no other end but to be wicked, and to die wicked, and be damned for their wickedness : until I have *once* experienced the *Lord's insincerity*, I can never consent to be a proselyte to your *infidelity* : if I err, let me err with charity to my *Maker*. 3d. *Worldly, or circumstantial* : The *Almighty* has *decreed*, and that whatever *shall* come to pass ; but not whatever *will* come to pass ; whatever he ordained as necessary for the perfection and existence of this world, will certainly come to pass ; but existence in this place is a relative term, and only alludes to that space of time that *God* saw it necessary, or consistent with his own *glory* for it to exist ; for had his decree been as absolutely enforcing upon the mind of men, what *should* come to pass, as what *would* and did come to pass through their sin, why then he *decreed* to drown the world before he made it, and also *decreed* that men should sin that he might drown it ; and farther decreed that after *five thousand years* from his *six* days work, and pronounced it "*all very good ;*" that I should write my opinion upon the last days work, and say it was *very bad ; for he repented of this days work,* "*and it grieved him at his heart.*"

The *decrees* of *God*, as far as relates to the vicissitudes of this world, are his *providences*, and *dispensations* :

penfations : He has decreed, that while the world endures, he will never withhold all the necessary conveniencies that renders it fuitably adapted for the occasional purpofes, and advantages of its inhabitants, in food, and raiment ; nor that any of his created works fhall fail in their feafonable increafe, and productions, or from answering the intended design for which they were created ; neither do I believe any living kind upon the face of the earth have failed fince the flood ; but that there are many *heterogenous generations*, or *offsprings* of *beasts*, *birds*, *reptiles*, and *infects* proceeding from unnatural copulation, there is every plaufible reason to grant ; and I believe we fhould not exaggerate the number if we was to fuppofe them to be full *one third*, or at leaft, I do not believe that Adam gave names to more than *one third* of the prefent different tribes of living creatures ; but nevertheless, thofe that are not, as well as thofe that are congenial with *God's* immediate creation, do all partake in common of his *providential decrees* ; the benefits of creation ; but that he *decreed* their exiftence ; is a doctrine I muft leave to *John Calvin's* followers to evince ; but for my part, I do not think that *God* either *decreed*, or even *knew*, there would ever be a *Mule* upon the face of the earth, until this unnatural contrariety, entered the reftlefs mind of man's oppofite imagination for curiofity ; and that Noah never took *one* into the Ark we are well convinced ; for they could not “ *be abundantly*
in

in the earth, and be fruitful and multiply upon the earth." Gen. viii. 17.

The *decrees of God* relating to his *dispensations*, are, that he will *guide, direct, and overrule*, all the *temporal*, as well as *spiritual* concerns of those who have a desire to serve him with *uprightness of heart, and integrity of soul*: he will *be to them a God, and they shall be to him a people*;" Heb. viii. 10. He will in a peculiar manner distinguish himself by gracious and divine workings, so as to enable them to overcome the rising inherent sins of their own hearts, and triumph over the natural corruptions wherein they were *conceived*; as well as to be able to foresee, and eschew outward, or worldly temptations, or to subdue them when they are tempted; and thus to grow more, and more after the perfect man; "*for the end of that man is peace*" says, King David.

On the other hand; *God's dispensations* are also directed against the wicked, by *frustrating, disappointing, and preventing* their diabolical schemes and machinations from being effected, and thereby rendering unto them the reward of their evil imaginations; or the righteous would be always falling sacrificed victims to the devices of the ungodly: this is *one* of his decrees, that sin, and malice, shall not at all times prevail, nor the upright in heart be wholly subject to the unholy; but when it is his pleasure to permit it, it is calculated
for

for some beneficial purposes, either as *alteratives*, or *preventives* ; to work upon us by inspiration, or deliver us by chastisement ; so that in the end we may escape the dreadful consequences of it by being forewarned of the danger attending it. We oftentimes propose the performance of things that would be productive of evil consequences to ourselves, if the *Lord* did not bless us by frustrating them, although we may promise ourselves the fruition of much *good* in their enjoyment ; and this is in the true sense of the word ; *God's dispensation* ; and at other times it is permitted, to teach us wisdom by relying upon him for the disposal of all our *thoughts*, whether they tend toward good or evil ; so that he may be ALL IN ALL : consequently, *God's* decrees as far as they bear a relation to the circumstances, and operations of this world in affinity with the imagination of man's heart, are undetermined ; and will in a humble sense bear a similitude to our *resolutions* ; they proceed from unknown, and unforeseen causes ; but with *God* they are always *inviolable*, while with us they are frequently broke, and unnoticed. So far from the doctrine of *eternal decrees* relating to the future destiny of souls being the religion of *Jesus*, or of the *prophets* before him ; there is not once mentioned either of the words, *decreed*, *predestinated*, or *foreordained*, in the *historical*, *prophetic*, or *evangelical* part of the *Old*, or *New Testament*, nor no verse that bears any allegory to that meaning ; and if St. Paul's Epistles had by any accident been lost or destroyed, all christian's would

at this day been the disciples, and followers of Jesus according to the primitive fathers, unto whom the *Holy Ghost* was given, and who desired to know nothing more, "*save Jesus Christ and him crucified,*" 1 Cor. ii. 2.

The Epistles of St. Paul have no nearer affinity to the *gospel*, than the apocryphal writings in the old Testament have to the prophecies. They are no farther calculated for a rule of faith to *christians*; than the Apocrypha is a moral law to the *Jews*: they are very properly adapted to the capacities of christians, or believers in *Jesus*, as instructive lessons of morality, and holiness; they recommend in the most persuasive language the fulfilment of every incumbent duty, and strict obedience to the precepts of our Saviour; and lay open in an obvious manner the *rules, principles, and doctrine*, of the religion of *Jesus*; and throughout the whole of his writings, particularly enforce an exact conformity to the precepts, and examples of their *Lord and Master*, as declared, and maintained, by his *holy Apostles*, his immediate successors in preaching his gospel: He does not in any of his Epistles assume to himself the office of director, to either of the nations that he address, otherwise, than strenuously recommending a *faith* in *Jesus*, and manifesting this faith by *working* for *Christ*; "*for faith without works is dead,*" says, St. James; so that it is not a faith barely professional, but a faith virtually actual: that is, not merely a belief in him as the promised

Messiah

Messiah individually, but conjunctively with the other offices attached to his mission ; as a *prophet* foretelling the blessed effects redounding to *believers* from his death ; as a *priest* by preaching salvation, and manifesting the efficacy of his ministry by miracles ; as a *king* by declaring, and enforcing the will of God, relating to his divinity, and ascension to *heaven*, where *all* power in *heaven* and on earth would be delivered unto him.

The words spoke by *Jesus* in the *four Evangelists*, is the appointed, and instituted rule of faith, for all christians to follow ; and unto this St. Paul alludes in all his Epistles ; he does not introduce his own *miraculous conversion*, and *persecutions* after being converted, or those that accompanied him in his ministry, as a standard *rule of faith* for future generations ; as if all after ages were to be brought to the knowledge of a Saviour by the same supernatural operations ; It was no more than what the “ *Judge of all the earth* thought right,” that some wonderful, and surprising *conversion* proceeding from his Almighty wisdom, and power, should be displayed, to impress upon the consideration of the incredulous, a greater degree of credit in, and esteem for, this new discouraging religion ; a religion, that was a check, and obstacle, to every sensual, and carnal enjoyment, and which must all be sacrificed to a doctrine universally despised, and reproached ; promising no present enjoyment of any one gratification pleasing to the senses, or agreeable

able to the dispositions of human nature ; all the tempting inducements it held out to its converts were ; *the glories of Heaven hereafter* ; this word *hereafter*, conveys such *distant ideas* to our minds, as oftentimes to induce the poor *half-willing* soul to be relax, and thoughtless about salvation ; for if he is to partake of no pleasing sensations of delight before he quit this life, and take his flight into the world of spirits ; the time to look forward is so immensely distant, the time present, must be the time of enjoyment, and leave *poor hereafter* to its own never to come future consequences ; but that generation, and *twenty five* generations since are all circumscribed within the boundaries of that (never to come) *hereafter* ; and to all appearance, the present generation is making rapid advances towards increasing the number ; * no less than *two hundred and seventy-five* of those distant spectators, that saw *hereafter* through a *Telescope*, are all now enclosed within the receptacle of this never expected visitor, in the space of a few days.

There is no doubt but our Saviour gave a commandment to *one*, or more of his Apostles to record, and spread abroad the most peculiar, and beneficially remarkable transactions of his *life, death,* and *ascension*, (and as such, I verily believe we have it in the *gospel*, and *acts* of the *Apostles*) and that it should from generation, to generation, be transmitted

* At the time this Chapter was writing, the Epidemic Fever raged violently in the City of Philadelphia.

mitted to posterity, *as a rule of faith*. *Faith* is placed in the front, and *good works* bring up the rear ; and without detaining the minute circumstantial of *good works* ; suffice it to say ; it includes every christian duty, moral and spiritual.

In the gospel, there is nothing contained that exceeds the weakest capacity, or beyond the abilities of the most unlearned to comprehend, that can read it ; the road to *heaven*, or "*strait, and narrow path*" to salvation, is delineatd with so much precision, and exactness ; that none but the *wilfully blind* may see it, and none but the *deceitfully lame* may walk in it.

The *Prophets*, and St. *John* the Baptist preached the coming of *Jesus*, and foretold the event of his mission ; and while *Jesus* was in the flesh he fulfilled all the predictions of the *Prophets* and *John*, until the whole was perfectly accomplished ; and thus the law, and the gospel, do both interpret for each other, and all is very good, and one do not clash with the other, but an exact conformity subsists throughout the whole ; but neither the *Prophets*, *John*, nor *Jesus*, ever foretold, or said one word about *Saul* the persecutor, being to be converted, baptized, and new named, and then to write so many Epistles to so many nations ; or that ever there would be a necessity for him, or any other so to do ; especially in divers languages, and in the terms of *exhortation, admonition, consolation, and re-*
proof

proof so often as he did : for the gift of tongues was not given to the Apostles for writing, but preaching ; for our Saviour knew by dear bought experience, that *examples* were more prevalent than *precept*.

Now let us suppose for *one* minute, that had St. Paul more frequent opportunities to been personally conversant with the *Romans, Corinthians,* and other nations, and there had been no immediate necessity for those frequent letters to them, or if he had left the care of those churches to other Apostles, who would entirely neglected writing ; or lastly, if those churches had not preserved those letters St. Paul wrote to them, and consequently never came into public view : What then must been the rule of *christian faith* ? Where then must we have had recourse for the understanding of the christian doctrine, and precepts of *Jesus* ? Why certainly to the words of *Jesus* himself, as left on record by his immediate followers, and appointed ambassadors for the propagation of his gospel : there was no St. Paul in the days of *Jesus*, he was only a *second-hand* convert, to the religion of *Jesus* ; and who himself acknowledge *Jesus* to be “ *the author, and finisher of our faith* ; “ *he desired to preach, nor know nothing amongst them,* “ *but JESUS, and him crucified* ; not that himself, and *Stephanus, Fortunatus, Achaicus, Timotheus, Titus, Lucas,* and the rest of his fellow labourers were all *elect*ed before the world was created for salvation ;
and

and the residue of mankind to be damned, whether they did, or did not *believe their* report ; or whether the *arm of the Lord* was, or was not *revealed* unto them.

The advocates for this unscriptural doctrine do innocently (I hope) attempt to vindicate their principle of belief on *predestination*, by *twisting, turning, and metamorphosing* St. Paul's letters, into more senses, disguises, and forms, than even letters that he wrote, and confound the essentials, by perverting the meaning. I believe it would been impossible for *Calvin*, or any other person in the world to have maintained, or even devised in their imagination, so many unscriptural tenets as is at present defined under the appellation of the *reformed religion* : there are *reformers* that believe in *one God* ; *reformers* that believe in *two Gods* ; *reformers* that believe in *three Gods* ; *reformers* that believe in neither *heaven*, or *hell* ; *reformers* that believe in a limited *hell* ; *reformers* that believe in an *everlasting hell*, and *reformers* that deny a general resurrection for either *heaven*, or *hell*, and this medley of *religious* devotees may be all found sometimes within the walls of *one** *tabernacle*, or place of worship, consecrated to *religion*.

Do

* It is a saying of one of the best of Authors, best of Books, and best of men, (Mr. HERVEY,) that " *although we differ in ceremonials, we are all united in circumstantial* : I am sorry to differ in opinion from this *good, and worthy man*. It is morally impossible that such a union amongst us can subsist ; for while the instruments of uncharitable prejudice are supported and used
by

Do not every line, every word of the *New Testament* strongly enforce our making some return unto *Jesus* according to our abilities, and capacity, for what he has done for us? are we not expressly commanded to clothe the naked; feed the hungry; *relieve the distressed; heal the sick; give of our abundance proportionably to the poor; and to take up our cross and follow him, through all trials, tribulations, or persecutions?* what conclusions can we draw from these injunctions but that it would be doing *his will*, and the *will* of *his Father* that sent him. Hear what he says, "*I and my Father are one,*" John x. 30. *his will*, is *his Father's will*; but what could the fulfilling of *his will* avail to *me*, or to *thee* my reader, if *his Father* did for almost *six thousand* years before either of us were conceived in our mother's womb, predetermine we should be both damned in *hell fire* with the *Devil* and his *Angels* for ever, and ever? such is the doctrine of *absolute election*: what can we suppose would been the answer of *Jesus* to his disciples if the following six questions had been put unto him.

1st.

by the hands of *mere notional* ceremonials; circumstances must feel the ill-effects of it, and consequently be wounded.

By taking the word ceremonials in a *religious* sense, as to the outward forms of *godliness*, it is, comparatively speaking, the "*strait and narrow path*" alluded unto by our Saviour, in St. Matthew's gospel; and as there is but *one* narrow path, neither should our *ceremonials* be more than *one* in *form* or *power*; as *Jesus* and his Apostles were *one*, so should all of us their posterity be *one*; not deviating from that line of brotherly love, and charity, that distinguished the early disciples of *Jesus*, from the world.

1st. Master, who are those that thy Father has decreed, or ordained, from eternity, for everlasting life?

2d. Who are those predestinated by him for everlasting damnation?

3d. Thy invitations to mankind are *universal*, and *general*; but *God's decrees*, are *particular*, and *special*: if we leave, and forsake all for thy sake; it is probable we may at last come short of thy promised glory. Thy *free will offering* is; to cast *none out*, that come unto thee. Canst thou insure safety unto us, that thy Father will take *all in*?

4th. If all men come unto thee, will all men be saved? 5th. If no man believe in thee, will no man be saved? 6th. Canst thou make void the *decrees* of thy Father before the world was created?

We will suppose the following to be the answers our Saviour would gave those curious inquirers.

1st. "All those that *fear* him, and *keep* his commandments;" "*this is the whole duty of man*" says the son of David; the "*man after God's own heart*."

2d. "*All those that serve not God with holy fear and love: and do his will on earth, as it is done in heaven*."

3d. "My Father gave me for a sacrifice; he" "*so loved*"

loved the world, that he gave me *his only begotten son, that whomsoever believeth in* me *should not perish but have everlasting life."*

4th. *"By coming unto me; taking my yoke upon them, and doing my will;" "with such sacrifices" "my father" "is well pleased;" "and they" "shall inherit glory."*

5th. *"Whosoever speaketh a word against" "me as" "the son of man it shall be forgiven him." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to" "my father" "and he will abundantly pardon."*

6th. *"My father decreed nothing relating to men's salvation, unconnected with conditional obedience, or disobedience." "I say unto you that likewise joy shall be in Heaven, over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance." "But had my Father decreed the sinners persevering impenitence; there could be no returning from wickedness nor joy in Heaven, and in the end I might say with the prophet" "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain."*

I suppose it will be expected from me after accusing others of wrong commentations upon St. Paul's

Paul's Epistles ; that I give my own opinion of such part of them at least, as bears any allegory to *absolute election*, or *predestination*. One of the most principal is the following, *Ephesians* i. 4. 5. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself according to the good pleasure of his will."

The Apostle writes this letter to the saints (or the preachers) and all the *faithful*, or believers, and followers of *Jesus Christ* ; from these premises we must draw our conclusions, whether these *saints*, and *faithful*, were *foreordained* before the foundation of the world, "to walk holy and blameless."

At the very onset of our commentations there seems to be a stumbling to the reality of the assertion ; for *St. Paul* himself, a good man, was a notorious exception, as we read in *Acts* ix. 4. 5. The very voice of Christ from heaven ; "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ? I am Jesus whom thou persecutest :" but to proceed ; the Apostle makes no mention of *whom*, or *how many*, were the *saints*, and *faithful*, that was chosen by God, to walk *blameless* ; for we all know he did not, until he was *struck blind* and continued so *three days fasting*. It was the *faithful*, that the Lord ordained should walk holy, and if the *faithful* did not walk holy even

even in that generation, as well as the present; what would become of all religion? but you say, the *faithful* frequently fall from holiness, and not walk *blameless*: I say, a person may disgrace his profession of *faith* and of course not walk *blameless*; but the Apostle is not speaking here of a bare *faith*, but the *fulfillers* of that *faith*, or in other words, the *faithful*; it is not merely a *faith*, but to be *full of faith*, which signifies to be perfected in holiness, so that sin have no dominion.

I cannot recollect any passage in the sacred writings, that mentions the revolt of the *faithful*; but a *negative faith* will not secure us against the power of temptations, but an *actual faith* will; that is, we must not only believe *in Christ*, but we must work for *Christ*; and then we shall be *faithful*; or in the Apostle's phrase, *full of faith*; God's foreordained *faithful*: *Abraham* was *faithful*, he walked blameless before God in love; and those that were *faithful in and to Christ*, the Lord predestinated them as adopted children by *Jesus Christ*.

Predestination in this place is a relative term, it bears an analogy to time antecedent to the coming of *Jesus* (as being *faithful* in God's promises, and walking *blameless*; and therefore holds good as to God's equity, truth, and justice to *all men*) and it also bears an allusion to the Messiah-ship, as being before the foundation of the *new world*, as regenerated; "*old things are past away, behold all things are become*

become new" 2 Cor. v. 17. In the four gospels I do not see the words *predestination*, *foreordination*, *decree*, nor *reprobation* once mentioned; but the word *elect*, is, *four times*; *three times* by St. Matthew, and *once* by St. Luke, but the proper meaning of the word in these places, do so obviously allude to the *faithful in Jesus Christ*, or the *upright in heart*, unconnected with what is termed *God's chosen*, and *elect* people before the foundation of the world for glory; that it would be an insult upon common understanding to attempt to give a definition of the word here; we read of the children of *Israel* being an *elect* people chosen of God; but did their lives through the wilderness, and all along until the coming of *Jesus* manifest a *holy* and *blameless* life? read Numbers the xiv. and xix. chapters; Deuteronomy ix. Judges ii. 2 Samuel 2, and throughout all the Kings' reigns; now see, and judge, if all these transactions bears any similitude to a people *elect* for salvation, and to walk *holy* and *blameless* before the Lord? the Lord chose, or *elect* them after they were become a people (according to his promise made to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*) to be his favourite people; but never *elect*ed them for salvation, for he cut every one of them off in his *wrath* in the wilderness, that was *twenty years* old, and upwards, excepting *Joshua* and *Caleb*; if he had taken them away as a *righteous* generation in his mercy, from the evil to come; it would bear some allegory to *predetermined* mercy, and salvation; but to cut them off in his *wrath*, implies quite

the reverse to *eternal*, or even an *intentional* election to *glory* since their existence as a people ; it is very evident they had the same commandments to observe, and duties to discharge, as succeeding generations, and as every future generation will “ *to make their calling and election sure,*” which is summarily comprehended in the 37th and 38th verses of the xxii. chap. St. Matthew ; “ *Jesus said unto him, thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind :*” This is the first and great commandment.

Now my *dear friends*, from one end of the earth to the other, I have endeavoured to explain unto you, that God’s *decrees* and his *omniscience* are both the same, and differ only in degrees ; as *infinite*, *eternal*, and *worldly* ; and *election*, and *predestination* are the same ; but not in *one* place throughout the *old* or *new* testament alludes to any *foreordination*, or *foreknowledge* prior to the creation of the world ; for he would not have created a world, that he *foreknew* (much less *ordained*) that its inhabitants would afterwards *grieve him at his heart*, and cause him to *repent of what he had done*.

We now return to the defence of *Christ’s* divinity to the disgrace of his religion, that there are any should make it needful for a defence to be advanced for the demonstration of so evident a truth.) He is allowed to be the *Son of God* by the principal
part

part of christians throughout the world; consequently, to those it is needless to attempt any revealed evidence, because they can read the sacred scripture with understanding and profit; but to those that either will not, or cannot comprehend it, I would wish to address myself in the plain language of simplicity and truth.

God is in himself the essence, and source, of pure infinite divinity, and all that dwelleth in his glorious presence (as angels) are by nature divine, and we ourselves by escaping "the corruption that is in the world through lust," may, as St. Peter says, "be partakers of the divine nature;" there is in heaven but *one* nature, that is divine; and on earth *two* natures; that is human, and spiritual: there are no created spiritual beings, but angels, and men, and by being spiritual (that is, endued with reasonable souls) we are in affinity with the angels, and bear a resemblance to our *Maker*; and, to be spiritual is to be divine; and though our spiritual, and divine natures are connective in essentials, they are quite disjunctive, and independent, in circumstantial; for the spirit or soul will be still the same in its inherent properties and qualities; and its everlasting state of experience depends *entirely* upon the improvement, or abuse of our divine nature; and to remove all scruples or doubt of our being possessed with divine natures, I only refer such scrupulous consciences to any of our present pastors of congregations, whether they preach the doctrine of this world,

world, or of the world to come, it makes no difference ; they all call themselves *divines*, and some of them, by their extraordinary talents (or more frequently some fortunate event proceeding from friendship, or influence) are successful enough to be promoted to “ *chief seats in the synagogue,*” and think themselves entitled to an *equal* degree of dignity to *God* himself ; and vainly style themselves “ *Right Rev. Father in God ;*” we need go no farther to prove the divine nature of men ; but though I have allowed them their self-assumed perishable empty title, and also admitted there is a divine nature in men ; I have not granted them the attributes of *divinity* ; for that is the prerogative of the Deity, and to such only as he please to bestow it upon ; and this I conclude must be to *beings* immaculately pure, and free from all impurity ; which must be the angels in heaven ; for no mortal man could ever lay claim to such perfection : where divinity is, there is no impiety ; but where spirituality is, there may be, and is, open infidelity.

We have now at least admitted the divine nature of *Jesus* (for certainly there is none would exclude him from an equality with men) but his divine nature taken simply in common with the race of mankind would not vindicate his cause, or screen him from the imputation of *Arius* ; but there must be some additional evidence of his mission to establish his reputation ; and that must be his *divinity* : to be divine only, would been ineffectual for the purposes

purpose of redemption, because it would been only mortal, suffered mortality ; but there must be the divinity annexed, or the sacrifice would not been complete to satisfy the demands of Infinity : I do not say his divinity perished ; but being the *eternal Son of God*, before all worlds, he left his divinity in heaven and surrendered up his divine (or spiritual) and human nature upon the cross ; and that he was the *Son of God*, and came down from heaven ; we have his own words, John iii. 13. “ *And no man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven ;* and that he did come down from heaven, we read in the 17th verse same chap. that he was *God’s Son*, and he *sent* him into the world, not to condemn, but to save the world, and *whosoever* (without respect of persons) believed in him should be saved : here his *divinity* admits of no argument ; if he had not been a heavenly host and endued with the divinity of *God*, a faith in him, would been no farther salutary towards salvation than in any other man ; for it was his *divinity* as the *eternal Son of God*, that distinguished him from other good men of old ; and that *divinity* was left behind in heaven as security, until the ransom was paid ; until the debt of *Infinite Justice* was satisfied : while he was on earth, he was subject to all the infirmities, exposed to similar temptations, and liable to the same sins as his brethren in the flesh ; and all which he experienced (sin excepted) but we do not read that he was guilty of *one* sin ; yet in *one* instance, we find his doubts almost amount to *faithlessness*

lessness in God the Father ; which you find in Mat. xxvii. 46. these words is a proof of his being at this time divested of his *divinity* : that is, his heavenly attribute ; or he would been more than man ; and in that case it would been impossible for his enemies to have wounded him *so*rely, or for him to suffer in agonies ; and also his superiority over mankind would have rendered his precepts and examples void, and of no effect ; because he being endued with an heavenly privilege, he would neither been our equal, nor we his ; and of course in that case we could plead his *divinity*, and our own imbecility ; and thereby, still had *a cloak for our sins* ; but taking upon him sinful flesh, he died in the likeness of sinful flesh, but yet without sin ; for he “ *knew no sin,*” 2 Cor. v. 21. and after his mission was fully discharged, he said as his last words ; “ *it is finished,*” and he is again ascended into heaven, to reassume his *divinity* ; and we have *no cloak for our sins* ; his mission was *suffering*, and our duty is *faith* ; he fulfilled his, now let all that pretend to be his followers, examine themselves, (as St. Paul recommended to the inhabitants of *Corinth*) and see how they have, or do, discharge theirs.

We are strongly urged to have faith in *Jesus Christ*, not merely in his miracles, or sufferings ; for that could not be of any intrinsic merit of itself, if we deprive him of those divine excellencies that he possessed before his descension ; it is his former and
present

present divine glories, that recommends him to our faithful consideration ; that he should for no other purpose but to call sinners unto repentance, and redeem from the miseries of hell, all those that do believe in him ; condescend to leave behind him all his heavenly attributes (that is, his divinity) and take upon him our form, and nature in all things, (sin excepted) and it is on this rock our faith must be built: the rock of his divinity, as connected with his *Godhead* ; for being the *Son of God*, he must inherit some of his Fathers properties, which is, his eternal divinity before all worlds, and everlasting power (now conferred upon him) over all worlds ; consequently, in his attributes we may now call him *God*, as equal to his Father in power and glory.

BOOK V.

Chap. I.

The HOLY GHOST and the SIN against it.

THE sacred writings both gospel, and epistles, doth strongly recommend an implicit obedience on the one hand, and faith on the other, to the doctrine of *Jesus*, as the promised Messiah ; and as the only means to secure salvation by experiencing the blessed effects of his mission, as the Redeemer of the world : during his being in the flesh, he went about doing good, and by reading the *four Evangelists* you have instances in plenty without my enumerating them : this we must call *Jesus's examples* ; for certainly *many* of them came within the abilities of mankind to each other ; and in this respect we can imitate him, if not equal him : and he also delivered exhortations, admonitions, and prohibitions, which, properly speaking, was his *precepts* ; but had not he manifested the authority of his mission by a display of the former ; it is very probable

probable he would have gained but few converts by delivering the latter : which verifies the proverb : *example is more prevalent than precept* ; he presses upon our considerations the vanity of all worldly delights, and to be prepared at any emergency to leave all for his sake : “ *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me,*” Mat. xvi. 24. By following him diligently with an unshaken faith in his embassy, to enable them thereby to undergo every tribulation patiently, and to withstand all inward, and outward temptations manfully ; and by easy access to him, and frequent intercourse with him, they may see the necessity of a Saviour, and feel the consolation of communion with one ; and becoming acquainted with their own sinful nature ; may apply unto him as souls heavy laden with *every* degree of sin, and procure *rest* and serenity of mind : hear what he says ; “ *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,*” Mat. xi. 28. “ *And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.*” John vi. 37. In this general invitation, *all the sins* possible to be committed by man is included ; for was there *one* exceptionable sin, and only *one* man in the world guilty of that sin, it could not be said ; “ *that the world through him*” should “ *be saved,*” John iii. 17. for there was *one* sinner excepted, and *one* unpardonable sin remaining ; neither could it be said that his blood “ *cleanseth us*” *from*” all “ *sin ;*” nor that he *offered his body as a sacrifice* “ *once for all :*” but as our religion demands a belief

belief that he did die for all sin, and all sinners ; then of course in those days while he was upon earth, neither *Pharisee, Publican, Saducee, Jews* or *Gentile*, of any description, could commit an *unpardonable* sin ; for all kind of sinners, and all degrees of sin, came under the healing influence of this great physician of souls.

We do not read of this unpardonable sin in any of the *Mosaical*, or *prophetical* writings ; or that ever the *Great Jehovah* in the midst of the abounding iniquities of succeeding generations, in his frequent revelations to the *prophets* spoke after that manner ; he promised pardon to all the wicked, that turned from the unrighteousness of their thoughts, but no one particular sin excepted, as absolutely unpardonable : notwithstanding, there are many prohibitions from the *Almighty* to good men of old, relating to some singular, and peculiar sins that would be more aggravating and heinous in his sight than others, and the committing them would invoke his wrath and anger in an exemplary manner, which we read in the book of *Leviticus* ; but it is no where said, that *all*, or *either* of these sins excluded the sinner from mercy through *eternal* predetermination ; for had the *Almighty* decreed a sin, and established it inviolably unpardonable ; is it not consistent with *reason, religion*, and every *moral* duty, to suppose that *God* would have manifested his *eternal* will by some divine means to *Mo-*

ses,

ses, Joshua, Samuel, David, or some of the patriarchs, or prophets, and especially to Abraham the faithful, when he spoke unto him after this manner ; “ and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,” Gen. xxii. 18. or unto Moses when he called him to be a deliverer and leader of these people ; in whose seed “ all the nations of the earth ” were to be blessed ; but there is not one word of forewarning against, or threatening for the commission of this sin ; and consequently there was no such sin existing in those days : and now to come to our Saviour’s time, who first speaks of this sin, during all his preachings, miracles, exhortations, or precepts, never once give an hint towards describing the nature of this sin, or even mentioned it but on one occasion, when the Scribes and Pharisees imputed his miracles, to an alliance with the Devil ; neither did any one of his ministers that were expressly commissioned by him for the purpose of propagating his religion ever speak about this sin, as to its nature or danger ; even St. Paul is totally silent in his earnest letter of reproof to the Gallatians, who of all the new established churches of Christ, was the most incredulous, and the most easy to be seduced from the truth of that doctrine, and given to change ; and of course the most likely to fall into the guilt of this unpardonable sin ; but we read nothing that either of them, or of any other individual soul in the world that ever did commit it ; consequently, it must be a sin so easily known, and within the conception of every adult person, that it would

would be needless to define it ; and not to be left to the learned, and erudite *commentators* of the *sixteenth* or *seventeenth* century to explain it ; and that this was the case, I hope I shall prove to the conviction of *many*, (and that I know I have already done with the *manuscript*) but to flatter myself with the expectation of pleasing, or persuading *all*, I am not so vain : but *one* thing I can say, with safety, and peace of mind : I have pleased myself, and acquitted my *conscience* : and now leave all my readers to *theirs* : if they do not offend their *Maker*, they cannot hurt me.

We do not read throughout the *law*, *prophets*, *gospel*, *epistles*, or *revelations* of *St. John*, of *one* soul that ever fell a sacrifice to this sin ; even of all the multiplicity of sins before the flood, and amongst those of *Sodom* (where *ten righteous* could not be found) there is not a tittle mentioned about an *unpardonable sin* ; a few minutes reflection must produce very *awful* contemplations upon a considering and righteous soul, of the consequences of this sin ; for fear he has unavoidably, or inadvertently been guilty of it, and after all his growth in grace, and long suffering for Jesus Christ, by striving to make his "*calling and election sure*," fall "*short of the glory of God* : " Such a sin there was, or no guilt would been declared as such by *Jesus* ; we now enter upon the nature of it.

As to the sin against the *Holy Ghost* ; there has been a time when it could *not* be committed : there
has

has been a time when it *could* be committed : and from that time to the end of the world it *never* again can be committed : there was a time when *some* souls could do it ; but there never was a time when *every* soul could do it.

Jesus, while he was upon earth, was zealously persecuted by his *foes*, and I believe sometimes forsaken by *pretended* friends ; he exerted every reasonable faculty in the discharge of his embassy with which his Father intrusted him, to bring mankind to a knowledge of him, and belief in him ; but the direful effects of his earnest entreaties, and ardent persuasions, is a lamentable record in holy writ ; neither *miracles*, *promises*, *invitations*, or *threats*, could work upon their hardened, and obstinate natures to place credit in his *embassy*, or faith in his *ministry* : he was every where by the majority of the people, treated as an impostor, a disturber of the peace and tranquility of the country ; and one that provoked the people to tumult, and sedition : his tenderness, feeling, and love for all those under the pangs of calamities of different natures and degrees ; instead of augmenting his believers, oftentimes only increased his enemies, and inciting them to further malice, and added fuel to their blasphemous flames ; every kind of ignominy, and reproachful slander was cast upon him, to alarm the peoples' minds with inveteracy against him.

Unto such an unenlightened, and heathenish generation, it must be granted he had the appearance of a *natural* born man (and what if he was to make his second appearance, to this *enlightened*, and *over-righteous* generation? but I will be silent here) his father a humble mechanic; his birth mean; his education poor; neither *genealogy*, *pomp*, or any train of *magnificence* to recommend him to the elevated notice of the exalted, and dignified, (which in those days, as well as the present, bore two much sway over the opinions of the *low*, and *humble minded*, and by usurped authority subjected them to implicit obedience, against *poor, iron fettered conscience*) nor no credentials to produce to vindicate his presumption of being the promised Messiah, according to their dark apprehensions, and comprehensions of the prophecies concerning him; although his *miracles* were indisputable demonstrations, it was insufficient to prevail over the incredulity, and inveteracy of his enemies; and even at the very last, when he was brought before their cursed tribunal, his very Judge (Pontius Pilate) that condemned him, acknowledged he could find no cause for conviction, but at the same time too incredulous to believe him to be the *Son of God*; and although they condemned him, their hearts was pricked within them, and was almost ready to cry out with the multitude; “*men and brethren, what shall we do?*”

Acts ii. 37.

Thus

Thus was the malice of his enemies brought to the highest pitch of rancour; and from this judgment gave against *conscience* by *Pontius Pilate*, until his crucifixion concluded the melancholy catastrophe; and thus ends the unparalleled sufferings of *Jesus*, in the fulfillment of his *Messiah-ship* in the flesh.

Now observe, all these *ignominious reproaches, revilings, persecutions, mockeries, and tortures*, amounted to no more in that generation, than *trespassing* against the *Son of man*, as he calls himself, *Mat. xii. 32.* for not having *faith* in his *divine nature*, they could not *sin* against what they did not believe; and although the *Lord* from *heaven* spoke, and said “*this is my well beloved Son, hear ye him,*” it is to be doubted, whether *one* of those concerned in his death *active* or *passive* heard those words from *heaven*, and if not, we cannot suppose they would believe the assertions of *Jesus*, or his disciples that were present at that time.

We have no reason to doubt, but that many of those that were directly, or indirectly instrumental in his death, was *after* his resurrection, and ascension, converted by his apostles and became not only believers in, but zealous supporters, and defenders of the christian religion, *and saved their souls alive*: for the magnitude of their *trespass* against him while in the capacity of *prophet, priest* or *king*, was no exception to the general proclamation of pardon, upon the condition of penitence, and amendment of life

life “according to his holy word ;” for it was only sinning against him, as “the Son of man.”

Now cometh the unpardonable sin ! but whosoever sinneth against the Holy Ghost, his sin shall not be forgiven him in this world, nor that which is to come.”

There was a mixed breed of the Jews called *Saducees*, that believed not in the resurrection, and it being a very principal point of Jesus’s doctrine to inculcate into the minds of his followers a belief in this principle : it was necessary for him not only to acquaint them of the possibility of it, but to convince them by an instance of its reality ; and consequently informed them for their satisfaction that himself after being three days in the bowels of the earth, in his grave with the dead, he would rise again and be seen amongst them ; he fulfilled this prediction, and was conversant with his disciples, and others for *forty* days afterwards, and frequently exhorting and admonishing them to a strict adherence unto, and perseverance in the faith that he had sealed with his blood, and again repeated unto them his curse on impenitent sinners, but particularly the sin against the *Holy Ghost*.

“*You have been*” says he, eye, and ear witnesses to my labours, and sufferings while I continued with you in the flesh ; but neither of these, nor my miracles or death, was effectual to convince you of my veracity : I forewarned you of my resurrection
before

before my death ; but still incredulity predominated over our minds : are you now convinced that I am the *Jesus* whom you crucified ?

As I told you before, I again repeat it ; that whatever sins was committed against me as the *Son of man* before my death, should upon penitence, and contrition be forgiven ; but whosoever sinneth against me *now*, as an *HOLY GHOST*, *risen from the dead*, and ascending to my Father in heaven, his sins never shall be forgiven him, neither in this world, by my Father, nor in the world to come by me ; when the Father has conferred all power upon me, to Judge both the quick and the dead."

"My human nature descended into the grave with me, and therein did I divest myself of all mortal properties ; and am now going to be taken from you in the spirit, *that where I am ye cannot be yet*, but my *holy spirit*, or *ghost* shall accompany you, and all believers in my name until the end of the world : some time after this, when his disciples were assembled together for devotion *privately*, for fear of the Jews, the *Holy Ghost*, or *spirit of Jesus*, came and stood in the midst of them, and after shewing them his *hands*, and his *sides*, to remove all doubts and mistrust, of his being their crucified Master, or Saviour ; "*he breathed on them and saith unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost,*" St. John xx. 22. "*which shall be to you a comforter to the end of the world.*"

It was to those *only* that should either be *eye* witnesses, or convinced *ear* witnesses, that the sin against the Holy Ghost was denounced with the judgment of no forgiveness; for that being the last demonstrative evidence and proof of his *Messiahship* and *Divinity*; if that season of conviction and conviction was slighted and rejected, the doors of mercy would be for ever closed.

Do we read of any one that *saw Christ* after his resurrection, that sinned against his appearance? or denied the visibility of his Holy Ghost? We do not. Consequently, as I mentioned before, there has been a time when this sin could *not* be committed, a time when it *could* be committed, and a time when it cannot be committed. *Before* the coming of *Jesus* it could *not* be; between his resurrection and ascension it *could* be; and since his ascension it *cannot* be, unless we become apostates to the faith of the christian religion entirely; and then his *Messiahship*, *crucifixion*, and *divinity* must be included to make a *sin* of it; for the commination was announced only to those who either *saw* him after his resurrection, or *believed* it from undoubted report; and the veracity of the apostles' testimony might as likely be discredited by the immoral and profane in this generation, as his mission was in that; for we have no further evidence adduced now, than the primitive christians had *seventeen hundred* years ago, for the truth of *Jesus* being risen from the dead; consequently
it

it is impossible for this, or future generations to commit the *sin against the Holy Ghost*, as *one particular, unconnected sin, uncompounded with all other sins, peculiar to the offences against Jesus Christ, as the Saviour of the world.* We read of no more than *one person* that even *hesitated* in his belief of the *Holy Ghost*; and that was *Thomas*, and that seemed to proceed more from zeal for the truth of *Jesus's* prediction, than from any settled doubt of the truth of what his brethren declared unto him; and to remove this wavering faith, *Christ* said unto him at *another time*, "*Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing.*" And *Thomas*, after being thus convinced, cried out, "*My Lord and my God!*" This is the only instance recorded in scripture of any one being in danger of this unpardonable sin.

Chap. II.

On the TRINITY.

HITHERTO I have only treated upon the *divinity* of *two* distinct persons, *God the Father*, and *Christ the Son* ; but to make the number complete, according to the established principles of the christian religion, in every denominated church that I know ; I must introduce *one* more, to make the number *three* ; and after finding this *one*, and transplanting him into *Heaven* with *God* and his *Son*, I must transform all these *three* persons into *one God* ; and this *one God* must be the Creator of *Heaven* and *earth* ; must be the *Jesus* that was born in a stable, and flew into *Egypt* to save his life ; must be the *Jesus* that was crucified ; must be the *Christ* that breathed the *Holy Ghost* on the disciples ; and must be the *one Great Almighty God*, that never had a beginning, nor never will have an end.

I confess, and I am neither ashamed or afraid to confess it, that it exceeds my abilities to find the *third* person, much less to unite *three* persons together that I cannot find, and make them all *one God*.

When

When I ponder upon the *Trinity* according to the present notions of the world, it bring to my ideas a *heterogenial Being* with *three faces*, and *one mouth* and *body*, and these *three faces* can occasionally represent *three persons jointly* or *separately* at the same moment of time, both in *heaven* and on *earth*, and in ten thousand different places at the same instant, altogether as *one* indivisible person, and *separately*, as *three* distinct, unconnected *Beings*, and entitled with the appellation of *Father*, *Son* and *Holy Ghost*, three persons, but *one God*; and these *three* always were, and always will be but *one*. This *one* made aprons for Adam and Eve; these *three* spoke to Moses out of the burning bush; this *one* is *infinite* in himself, and never had a *beginning*; these *three* are that *one*, and was *born* of a woman and laid in a manger; this *one* was led to the top of a mountain, and tempted by the *devil*; these *three* fasted *forty days* and was an *hungred* (the first time I ever knew the *Almighty God* to be *hungry*) this *one* was hanging on the cross, and calling to his *Father*, "*Eli, Eli*;" and these *three* were put altogether into *Joseph's* sepulchre; and this *one* arose from the dead; and these *three* all ascended into *Heaven* to their *God*, and our *God*; and to complete the mystery, neither this *one*, nor either of these *three* ever quitted the seat of *glory* in *Heaven*; for with this *one-three*, there was never any "*variableness* or *shadow of turning*," but the same *yesterday*, *to-day*, and *for ever*;" they were never *tempted*, never *fast-*
ed,

ed, never crucified, never buried, nor never ascended from earth to heaven to another God.

These are the mysteries of the unity, in *Trinity*; paradoxes that I leave to others to solve after their own imaginations; but for my part, I can reconcile my sentiments to the *unity in Trinity*, on more plausible and rational documents, without presenting my adorations to *deities*, that I can neither *conceive* nor *comprehend*.

My *creed* of the *Trinity* is this; *God the Father*, made the aprons for *Adam* and *Eve*; *God the Father* spoke to *Moses* out of the *burning bush*; and *God the Father*, never had a beginning. *Jesus* the *Son* was conceived by *God's* holy spirit, and born of a *woman* and laid in a *manger*; *Jesus* the *Son* was tempted; *Jesus* fasted *forty days*; *Jesus* was hanging on the cross; and *Jesus* was laid in the sepulchre.

The *Holy Ghost* of *Jesus* arose from the dead; the *Holy Ghost* ascended into *Heaven*; and the *Holy Ghost* conferred power upon the apostles, by *breathing* upon them.

Thus by allowing the *Father* to be the moving principle in the *three* first points; the *Son* in the *five* next, and his *Holy Ghost*, or *Spirit*, in the three last, the whole mystery is cleared up, and nothing "*past finding out*," left as a maze upon our understanding

standing to puzzle us with obscure and intricate conjectures.

The *three persons* represented under the names of *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, as *one God*; I define after this manner;

Before the coming of our Saviour in the flesh; there was then in *Heaven* himself, in the spirit, his *Father*, and the *angels*; but no such a person as is now distinguished by the *Holy Ghost*; and after the mission of *Jesus* was fulfilled, and ascension into heaven again, it is now his *Holy Ghost*, or *Spirit* with the *Father*, the same as before he took upon him our nature, without either addition to, or diminution from his former *glory*; but he is now equal to his *Father* in *Power*, having it conferred upon him for to execute it upon those that will henceforward rebel against him; but if the reader refer back to the *second* chapter, he will find I did not attribute any power to the *Son* when he was created.

The unity of persons (if the expression is allowable) now in heaven, is the *Father* and *Son*; but to bring the language nearer to our present ideas of the *divinipotent*; we will call it the *Holy Ghost*, or *Holy Spirit* of the *Son*, which arose from the dead, and reassumed his former seat in *Heaven*; so that there are *two* distinct persons as there always was, and *one God*.

The

The first chapter of *St. John*, and *1 Timothy* iii. 16, are the only *two* places in the sacred writings that conveys any distant allusions to *Christ* being God.

It is only the *first, second* and *third* verses of *St. John* that want an explanation: *St. John* is declaring the creation of the world and the mission of *Jesus*: “*In the beginning was the word.*” “*Let us make man*” God “*and the world was with God;*” us; His Son “*and the word was God.*” us; It was God’s word. “*The same was in the beginning with God,*” his Son, before the creation. “*All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.*” The Son (if I may be allowed the phrase) was co-operator with the *Father* in creating the world; for God says, in *Genesis* i. 26, “*Let us make man,*” and my reader will recollect, that in the first chapter of the second book, I allude to the Son, where the *Almighty* addresses his voice to *another*, in creation’s works, and by taking the words in this sense *Jesus Christ* or the *Word*, may very properly be said to *make*, or be *one* with his *Father* in making the world.

The creating of the world was no more than God’s will; he willed there should be a world, and in six separate days it was completed, and all that was in it. The Son’s will, was in unity with the *Father’s* will, and thus he also became the *Maker of the world*:

world; because he *willed* it: If *two*, *ten*, or *twenty* men join together to build a house, it is the *architect* is called the *builder*; but every *one* of those that contributed towards it, can say, "*without me was nothing made that was made.*" But although the Almighty could have created the world, or *man*, without saying, "*let us*," it was his pleasure so to speak—"Let *us* will a world," and they both willed, and a world became. I am sensible that the word *us* is not mentioned until after the works of creation was finished in the Mosaical account; but there is no shadow of room to imagine the *Son* was unconcerned in the first *five* days work, and advised with on the *sixth* only, in making or creating *Adam*.

In the other part of the sacred writings where the *Son* is mentioned as God; 1 *Timothy*, iii. and 16, "*God manifest in the flesh.*" This alludes to nothing more than his exaltation at the right hand of God; as a contradiction to the humble, and abject state he was in when upon earth. St. Timothy seems to speak it more from the ardour of religious enthusiasm, and gladness, that unbelievers were convinced, than from any notion, or belief that it was the *One Almighty* self-existing God; a doctrine that was never mentioned in the world, until superstition, and blind prejudice found way into the *Roman Liturgy*, and deserve but little more notice at this day, than many of their other *Legendary tales*. Permit me to recommend the perusal of a few proofs, and any unprejudiced, and calm reader may easily judge who it

it was that was crucified: St. *John*, v. and 17.—xiv. and 28.—xvi. and 32.—1 *Cor.* i. and 3.—*Hebrews* v. 8, 9, 10.

I can bring to my ideas *threescore* persons, as easily as I can *three*; but to rest my imaginations and conceptions upon two, I can easily; that is, *God the Creator*, and his *Son the Saviour*, or his *Holy Ghost*, at his right hand; although he is now no more, or less than the same immaculate Being, as he was before his descension to take our human nature upon him, otherwise, than having all power conferred upon him in *heaven* and *earth*; and if so, I do not know how he can be said to make *intercession* for us that is already endued with all power, if the text is taken in a literal sense; but the proper meaning of the apostle is; his continual intercession to *God* for *grace*, that our "*faith fail not*," he may have all power of judgment conferred upon him, but not the distribution of his *Father's grace*; as this is a gift unconnected with power or authority, I am inclined to believe that the *Almighty God* has still reserved to himself this prerogative; so that our *Saviour* is not interceding with his *Father*, for pardon for our sins, but for *grace* that we might not fall into them; but as this depends upon condition, and circumstances (as it ever did since the beginning of the world) we must not rest upon our *Saviour's* present *intercessions*, as absolutely *salutary*, although absolutely *requisite*; for we must still "*work out our salvation*

salvation with fear and trembling ;” to make “ our calling and election sure :” Now to comprehend all this, there is no straining of our imaginations : we can conceive, speculate, understand, and draw conclusions from our own ideas with plausible evidences of indisputable truth.

I hope my readers are convinced that I believe in *Father, Son and Holy Ghost*, and that my objects of adoration by references from what are past to the *One Great God*, are orthodox ; for I can with sacred delight, and reverence subscribe to *glory unto God the Father and Holy Ghost*, and faith in *Jesus Christ the Saviour* of the world ; consequently, the doxology that is universally used at the conclusions of our addresses at the *Throne of Grace*, are very proper, needful, and conformable to the sacred record—*“ May the grace of God, the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost, be with us for ever.”* I grant I have placed *two or three* words with a little deviation, but as I think they ought to be uttered.—The *Grace of God*, we all know what it is, and we all know our want of it ; the *love of our Lord Jesus Christ* is what we want now ; and the love he had for *all men*, while upon earth, is the love we ought to have for one another ; the *communion of his Holy Ghost* now in heaven, which in the xiv. Chap. of *St. John* is called the *comforter*, and this is the real support of all true Christians, and children of God, of all descriptions upon earth,

earth, and will be to the *end of the world*. Who do or do not, serve their *Maker* with uprightness, truth, and integrity, amongst the different *nations* in the world; we must leave to our *Maker* to decide; but such *individuals* as do walk before him humbly, and “*serve God acceptably with Godly fear,*” do experience the blessings of the same *Comforter*, and will until “*iniquity shall have an end,*” Ezekiel xxi. and 25.

CHAP.

Chap. III.

On the STATE of DEPARTED SOULS.

AS I am no *Roman Catholic* and an advocate but for few of their tenets, it must not be expected that the doctrine of *purgatory* will compose any part of this chapter; but nevertheless, out of respect and deference to many *members* of that *communion* with whom I have had the pleasure of personal acquaintance; I shall acquit my conscience from all flattery on one head, and untruth on the other, by declaring my belief, that there are more *real devout* christians in that church, than in the pretended reformers, and that the errors at present avouched, and maintained, are innovations introduced into the Litany; but for what ends I will not pretend to say, for although many authors before me have attributed those encroachments upon the true church of Christ to ambitious and unlawful causes; I think such *rash, severe, and unchristian-like* accusations, a *thousand years* before they were born, is very unjustifiable, and contrary to the words

words of our Saviour: *Judge not that ye be not judged.*" There is a wide difference between a bare *supposition* of guilt, and a downright *condemnation* as guilty, merely on the strength of that supposition: I believe we Protestants have no great room to boast of our *reformation*, *perfection* or *unity*: I think we have a *beam* in our own eyes, full as large as the *mote* in theirs.

To wave all farther digression, we return to our original subject under consideration.

We are taught to believe *that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust,*" Acts xxiv. and 15; and *that there is no wisdom, or device in the grave*: between *sleep* and *death*, there is a nearer affinity than between any *two* created causes, conditions, or circumstances peculiar to this lower world, it is almost impossible to draw the line of distinction; for there is no more subsisting *unity*, or *communion*, or *revelation* or *communication* or *moving principle* between the *soul* and *body* of one asleep, than there is between the *soul* and *body* of one in the grave; the grave is a bed: when any person is asleep they are either dreaming, or as inanimate; and in either sense the body is a motionless, and unconcerned lump, having no connection at all with the soul any otherwise than "*the breath of life,*" to keep it from putrefaction: when a person is in a dream, the soul is then present at the spot which attracts it, and no more connected with the *body*
while

while there, than if it was a corpse ; and it is no more possible to *awaken*, or put life into that body by *motion*, than if the breath was totally departed from it : now here is one necessary and consequential article comes under our consideration, or you may say, when once we go to sleep we should never wake more.

The *soul* is a *spirit* : a *spirit* require neither *space* or *time* to display its powers and operations, upon the faculties of man or beast : and until the GREAT I AM ! doth separate the *soul* and *body* by the stroke of death for evermore, it is utterly impossible for the *body* to be *hurt*, *disturbed* or even put in *pleasing* or *painful* motion without the *soul* being proportionably affected ; and thus it is while we are sleeping, the *body* is no sooner agitated by the impulse of any violence, but the *soul* is instantaneously present and experience an equal degree of its consequences ; so that before the *bodily* senses can assume their wonted faculties, and peculiar sensations, the *soul* is returned, and also reassume her wonted station with the *body* : there is no difference between a body asleep in a bed, and a body in the grave, but the animation of the soul ; and as soon as a separation takes place, the body become totally extinct, and quickly dissolve again to its original nature—*dust*—The soul still retain its native vivacity, and experience no more change in its intellectual faculties of *thought*, *conception*, or *ideas*, than while united to the body ; otherwise, than
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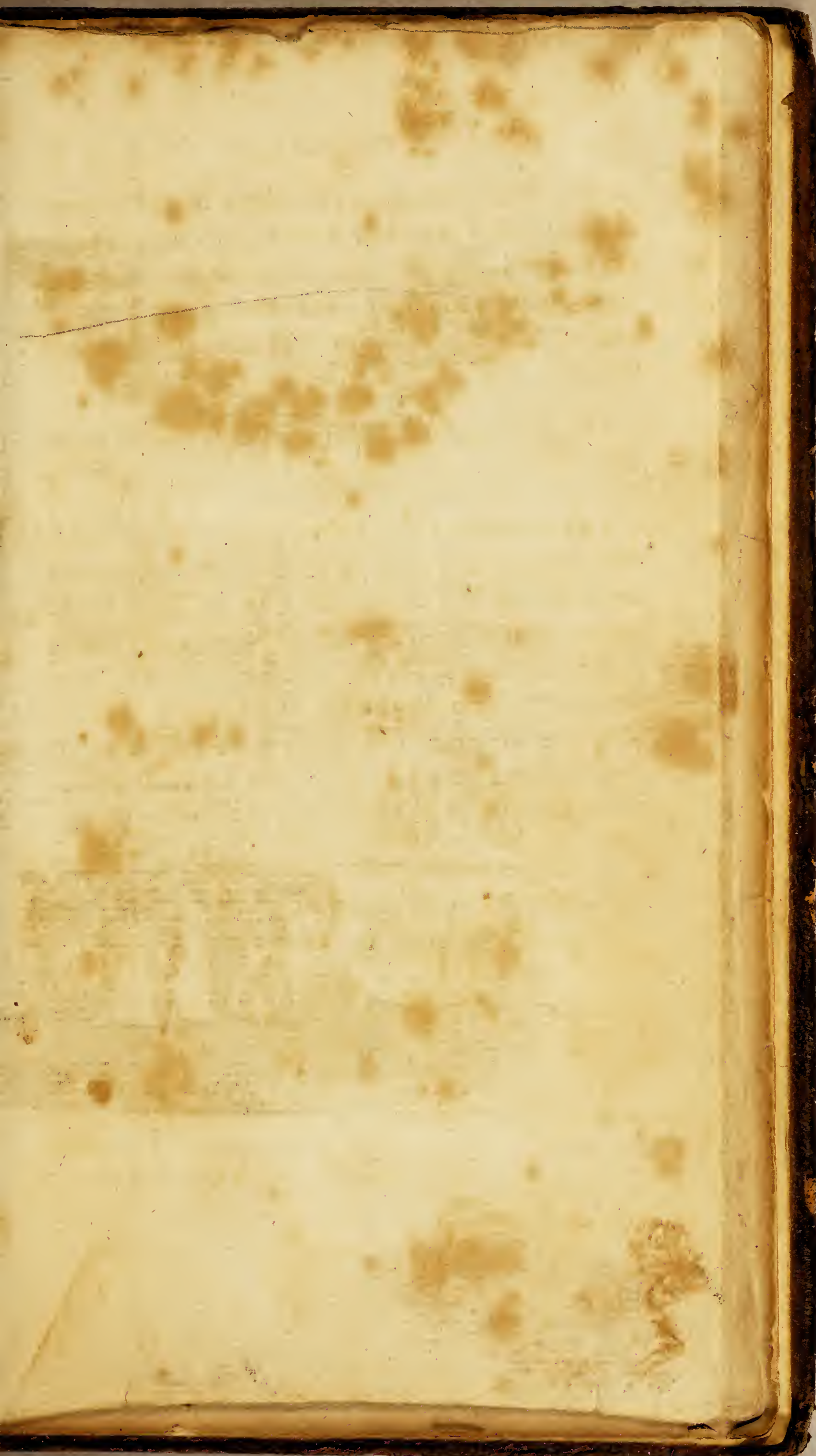
more perfection in its sensations, being free, and liberated from the clog of bodily ailments, and unincumbered with the crosses, and variety of incident circumstances that occasionally affected it while united with the flesh: It is capable of forming more clear ideas of its immortal existence and approaching state, and can reason, judge and deliberate within itself with undeceiving sagacity, upon its future fate; and according to the *deeds done in the body*, so can it form perfect conclusions of its irrevocable sentence at the judgment day, and this either elevates it to an enthusiastic happiness of anticipating felicity; or sinks it into a deplorable state of lamentable reflective depressions; this might with propriety be called a *purgatory*, from whence there is no redemption; and if this latter is the case, it bears some distant similitude to the present unceasing mortification of the fallen *angels*, till the general day of *everlasting* vengeance.

I am inclined to be of opinion, that souls intimately acquainted in this world either by affinity, or accidental occurrences in life, that might bring them together so as to cement friendship and acquaintance, either for *good* or *evil*; do again at times meet in the graves, or in other words, in the other world, and rejoice, or condole, with each other on the awful season advancing; partaking in an *exalted* or *magnified* manner of the happiness or disquietude of the children of *God*, and children of the *Devil* in this world.

world. I do not believe that there is one soul yet in *heaven*, that was ever born upon earth, except the Son of God ; not even *Elijah*, or the *Mother of Jesus*, much less any *cannonized saints* that are entitled to veneration or supplication from me to God.

We shall treat on *Elijah's transfiguration* hereafter.

I do not believe that *infants* or natural born *idiots* will undergo any form of trial, or tribunal appearance, at the day of Jubilee ; for as *Jesus Christ* offered himself up as a "*sacrifice once for all ;*" (and they being included in the number) and who is to be their *Judge* at the last day, having never offended him since he made their peace with his Father, in *thought, word, or deed* ; there can be no charge against them ; and of course they must be acquitted.





R. Colton inv.

Scoles.

BOOK VI.

Chap. I.

WE now speak a few words on the subject of *God's* impartiality, or being no respecter of persons or souls ; but that a universal resurrection will take place. It is contended by some authors, that Abraham, Moses, Enoch, and Elijah are now in Heaven, and their grounds of faith, or belief in this principle chiefly rests upon the transfiguration of the Prophet Elijah, because there was ocular demonstration of his dissolution ; but this is no argument of an evident conclusion that the soul ascended the regions of glory in heaven, because it was in that miraculous, and omnipotent manner, divested of mortality ; for the admission of this one soul would be making the Almighty a *respecter*. With *God* all things are possible that implies not a contradiction. Was there any more difficulty in the *Almighty's* dissolving the body of *Elijah* into *atoms*, or *nothing*, by his unrestrained, and *Infinite* power ; than there was in first creating his forefather *Adam* out of *nothing* ? this being granted : how must we draw the line of distinction between the soul of the prophet, and

and that of any other child of *God*? as for instance; The holy *Martyrs* that suffered at the burning stake, and their ashes scattered in the wind; others torn in pieces, and devoured by wild beasts; others blown to atoms by explosion; and lastly, others left in irons to decay, dissolve, and become totally annihilated between *heaven* and *earth*, some guilty, and some innocent; where now must we suppose their souls to be? if they died the death of the righteous, where is the difference between the Prophet, and the Martyr? why this: one dissolved gradually according to the course of perishing nature, the other instantaneously, by Almighty power; but the souls of each remain perfectly pure and happy, in the regions of uncertainty. We now conclude with a few words on the christian religion.

CHAP.

Chap. II.

On the CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

NO religion in the world, from those days, to the present time, has been established upon such a trial of *faith*, and *patience*, as primitive christianity ; and notwithstanding, all those persecuting tribulations are only a fulfilment of the prophetical predictions ; and exclusive of his crucifixion, there is not a circumstance of our Saviour's life, either by *praying*, *fasting*, or *miracles*, but was *equalled*, if not *exceeded* by some one or other of the good *Patriarchs*, or *Prophets* of old : as for instance, the effects of prayer ; read the ix. Chap. of Daniel ; iv. Chap. Nehemiah, and vii. Chap. 1 Samuel. Secondly, of fasting ; read Exodus xxxiv. and 28. 1 Samuel xxxi. and 13. and Esther iv. and 16. Thirdly, of miracles ; read Joshua x. and xii. Numbers xx. and xi. and 2 Kings iii. and iv. Chapters, now if an objection should be started ; that those *miracles* were by the immediate *influence*, and *power* of *heaven*, I answer, so was those of *Jesus*, who was
as

as capable of displaying *one* of those transactions that he manifested upon earth, as either of his disciples; for he had divested himself of all *divine attributes*, and was necessitated to have access to his *Father*, to enable him to fulfill any of his promises, or accomplishing any of his miracles; of this, there are instances sufficient in the four Evangelists without my enumerating any for references; but *one*, I would wish to introduce as a demonstrative evidence to prevent all doubtful disputations; the v. Chap. of St. John, but particularly the 19, 20, 30, 31 and 36 Verses.

This new religion of *Jesus*, was recommended under every probable disadvantage that possibly could be suggested; it was not accompanied with *one* single promising worldly recompence, or gratification; it was to be established entirely on *reversionary* rewards, which conveyed preposterous ideas to the imaginations of *Idolaters*, *Heathens* and *Magicians*; and if *faith* had not been very powerful with those that did embrace it, *converts* would been very few; and if diligence had not been very indefatigable amongst those that undertook the *ministry* to spread it; *faith* would been very declining, with those few that had enlisted themselves under its banner, and perhaps dwindled away again, or near it, to original Judaism. I think the present generation of christians ought to lift up their souls to *heaven* with devout gratitude that the establishment

ment of *Jesus*' religion was not left to the *Apostles* of our days ; the point in question now, is not which of the *twelve* shall be the first to *sell all that he has* and give to the poor, and to go about from house to house doing good ; but striving which shall receive the greatest pecuniary emolument and luxurious dainties of the world, for neglecting their duties ; and in time of their *Maker's* chastisement, and inflictive wrath upon a nation or country, for their sins, shall shrink from the enjoined duties of visiting, relieving, and praying with, and for their poor neighbours, and fly to distant shores, and wallow in their abundance, over the *mammon of unrighteousness*, with the vain and delusive imaginations of escaping the vigilance and over-ruling providence of the *Almighty* ; John xxvi. and 22. “ *Lord is it I ?* ” 2 Samuel xii. and 7. “ *And Nathan said to David ; thou art the man.* ” John x. 12, and 13. “ *But he that is an hireling, and not the sheperd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf (or evil) coming and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf (or rotteness) catcheth them, and scattereth (or destroyeth) the sheep. The hireling fleeth because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.* ” Isaiah xxii. 12. and 13. “ *And in that day did the Lord God of Hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and girding with sackcloth,* ” (and thus answers the priest of the people, the sheperd of souls. Fly the house of mourning,) “ *and behold joy and gladness,*
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On the Christian Religion. Book VI.

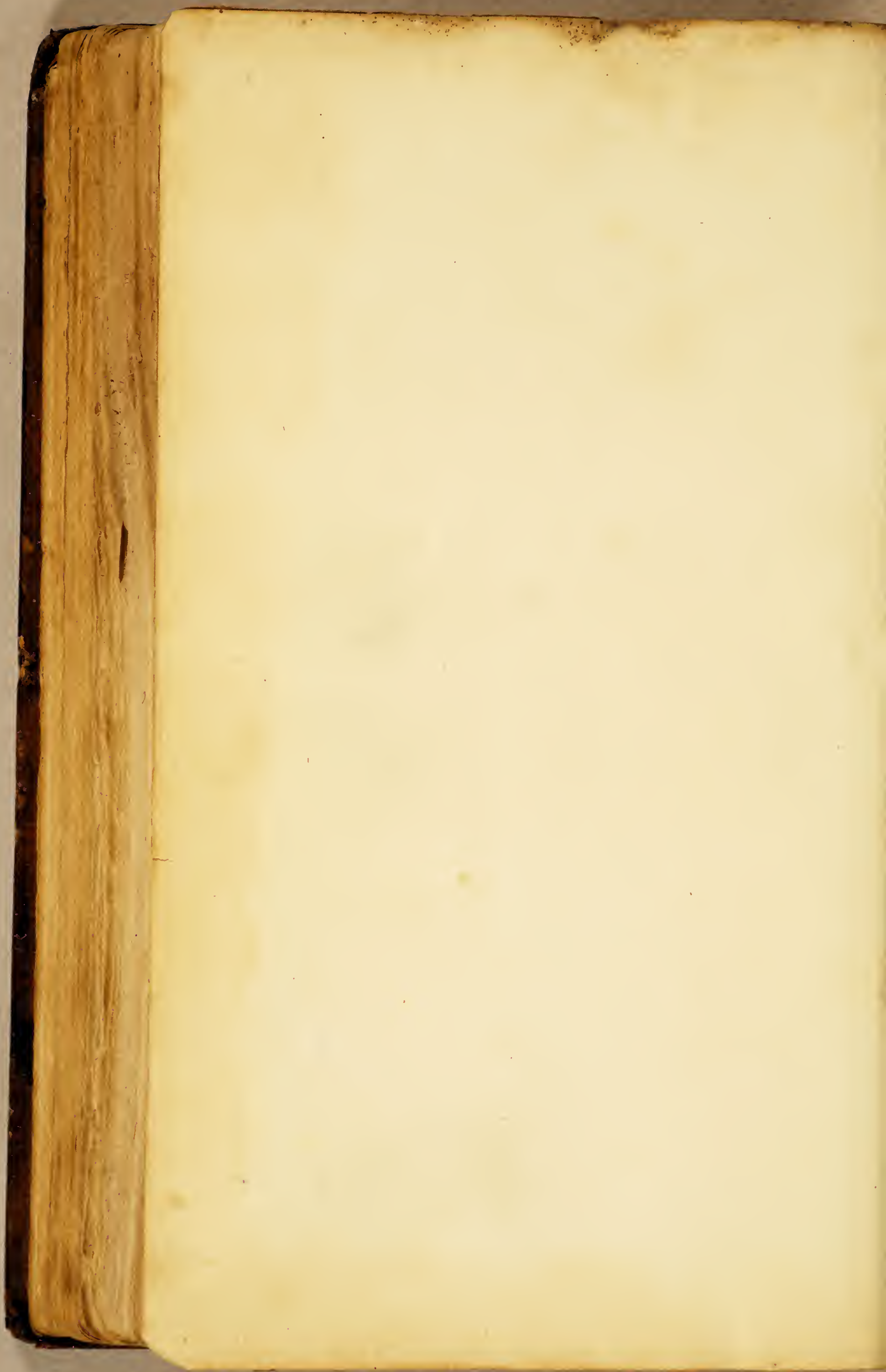
slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine, let us eat, and drink, for to morrow we die."

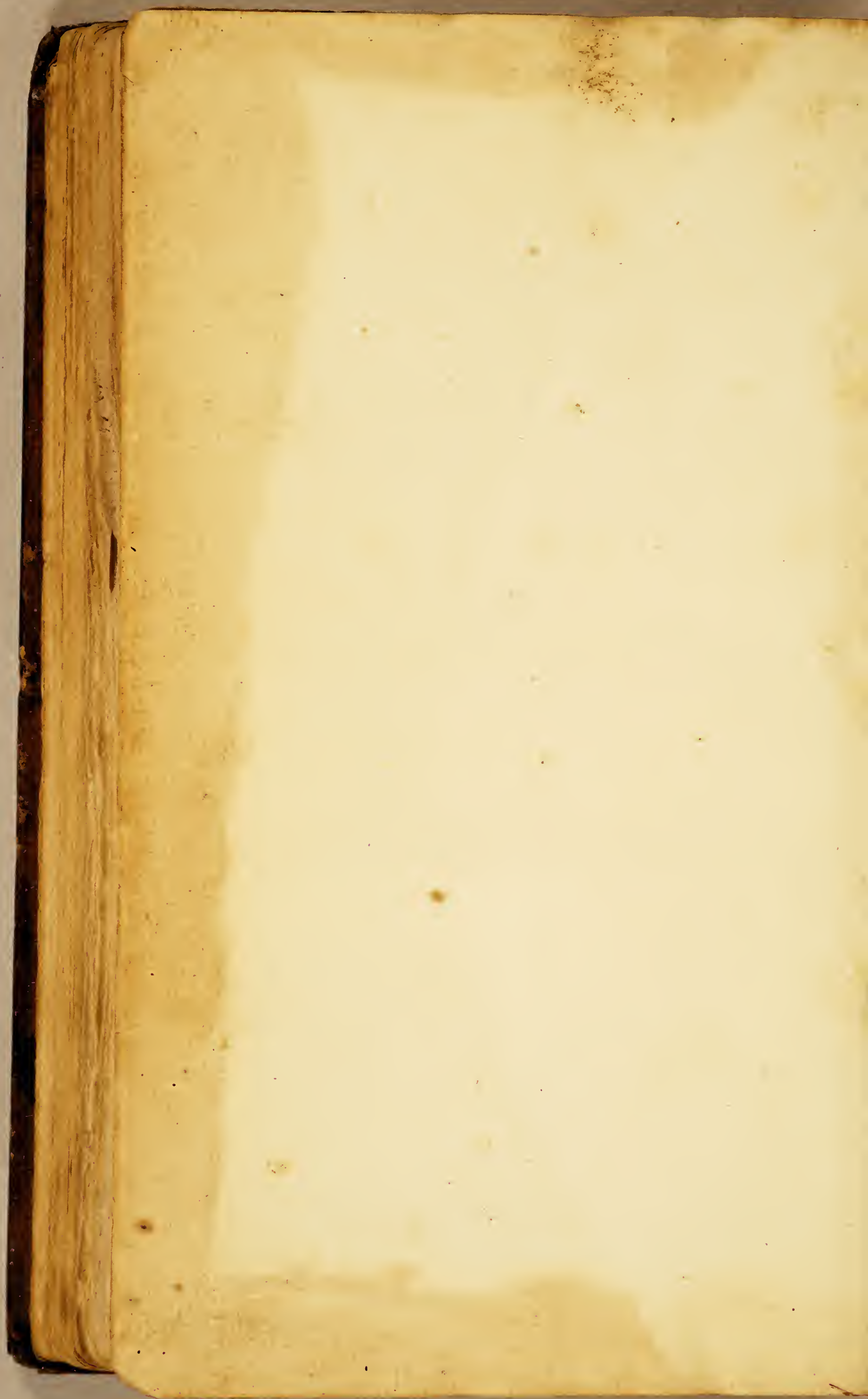
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